

Anti-Sexual Harassment Activism in Egypt:  
Transnationalism and the Cultural Politics of Community Mobilization

by

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## ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment has emerged as a widespread problem facing women in public space in Egypt. Activism to combat sexual harassment began in 2005. However, just prior to and in the years following the January 25, 2011 Egyptian Revolution, which witnessed an increase in the collective sexual harassment, assault and rape of women, this activism has increased. Subsequently, scholarly attention to sexual harassment and public sexual violence has also expanded. Much of the attention in scholarly analyses has been directed toward politically motivated sexual violence, focused on understanding the state commissioning of sexual violence against female protestors to drive them from protest participation. There is an emerging critique of activist approaches that seems to ignore the politicalized nature of sexual harassment to focus instead on “cultural” targets. The early work of the Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights (ECWR) and current work of HarassMap have been criticized for depoliticizing sexual harassment by failing to include an analysis of state-commissioned sexual violence in their work. Similarly, both have been accused of expanding the scope of the security state by calling for increased policing of public space to protect women from “culturally-bad” men.

With data collected through one year of participant observation with HarassMap, interviews with activists from eleven anti-sexual harassment initiatives and advocacy NGOs, and community-level surveys with non-activist individuals, this dissertation argues that “cultural” work undertaken through the community-based approaches by entities like ECWR and HarassMap is, in fact, an inherently political process, in which political engagement represents both an attempt to change political culture and state practice and a negotiative process involving changing patriarchal gender norms that

underpin sexual harassment at a society-wide level. New conceptualizations of sexual harassment promoted by anti-sexual harassment initiatives and NGOs in Egypt frame it as a form of violence against women, and attempt to make sexual harassment an offense that may be criminalized. Yet, this dissertation contends there is a tension between activist and widespread public understandings of sexual harassment, predicated on the incomplete framing of sexual harassment as a form of violence.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone at HarassMap (this is your story!), to all of my family members, but most especially my husband, three children, mother, mother-in-law, and brother-in-law, who most especially endured and persisted with me through this entire process. The telling of this has been our lives for many years. I love you all!

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	xi
 CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Framework: Ambiguities and Tensions .....	6
Research Questions .....	21
Methodological Approach .....	24
Positionality and Reflexivity .....	40
Argument and Dissertation Orientation .....	45
2. THE POLITICS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN EGYPT .....	57
The Problem of Sexual Harassment in Egypt: History, Theories, and Debates .....	59
HarassMap: Ending the Social Acceptability of Sexual Harassment in Egypt .....	79
Gender and Sexuality in Egypt .....	86
Gender Violence, Sexual Harassment and Heteronormativity .....	104
Gender Violence and Honor in Egyptian Law .....	110
Conclusion .....	113
3. THE STREET, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND MEDIATING TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS TO COMBAT GENDER VIOLENCE .....	116

CHAPTER	Page
Transnational Women's Rights and Violence Against Women .....	124
Mediating International Human and Women's Rights .....	136
Egyptian Civil Society and the Politics of Mediating Rights .....	143
The Street as the Site for Societal Change.....	149
Conclusion .....	154
4. ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT DISCOURSES: FRAMING NORMS OF GENDER VIOLENCE AND CRIMINALITY IN EGYPT .....	157
Patriarchy, Victim-Blaming and the Problem of Reporting Sexual Harassment.....	159
New Norms of Sexual Harassment in Egypt .....	174
Techniques of Framing New Norms of Sexual Harassment.....	198
Conclusion .....	208
5. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND THE POLITICS OF MOBILIZING BYSTANDERS .....	210
Decentering the Political: The Cultural Politics of Social Transformations .....	217
Bystanders, Critical Mass and Tipping Point: Theoretical Considerations.....	222
Mobilizing for Social Change: HarassMap and Community Activism.....	228
Bystander Publics: Changing the Nature of Social Responsibility.....	249
Conclusion .....	257



CHAPTER	Page
6. LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF TAHARRUSH GINSY: INCOMPLETE FRAME ALIGNMENT IN THE RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT .....	259
Online Arabic Discussion Forums: The Multiple Meanings of Taharrush Ginsy .....	262
Public Perceptions of Taharrush Ginsy as Visible From Three Cairene Neighborhoods .....	276
Conclusion .....	299
7. CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL CHANGE AROUND SEXUAL HARASSMENT .....	305
REFERENCES .....	310
APPENDIX	
A. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD HUMAN SUBJECTS EXEMPTION ...	342
B. SURVEY QUESTIONS .....	349
C. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....	351
D. SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS CODEBOOK .....	355

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Codes/Themes from Posts Across the Middle East and North Africa Region .....	268
2. Sub-Codes/Themes from Posts Across the Middle East and North Africa Region.....	268

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Distribution of All Posts By Country .....	265
2. Distribution of All Posts By Year.....	267
3. Distribution of Egyptian Posts By Year.....	267
4. Distribution of All Posts Coded as “Child Molestation” (Blue) and “Child Rape” (Red) by Year.....	272
5. Distribution of Egyptian Posts Coded as “Child Molestation” (Blue) and “Child Rape” by Year.....	272
6. Distribution of All Posts Coded as “Sexual Harassment of Women” by Year (Years Distributed in Quarters).....	273
7. Distribution of Egyptian Posts Coded as “Sexual Harassment of Women” by Year (Years Distributed in Quarters).....	274

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration	Page
1. “Staring” .....	181
2. “Catcalling” .....	181
3. “Following” .....	181
4. “This is All Sexual Harassment” .....	181
5. “Don’t Say It’s Because of How She’s Dressed” .....	185
6. “Open 24/7” .....	187
7. “Can’t Control Myself” .....	187
8. “I Was Just Joking With Her” .....	187
9. Safe Metro.....	194
10. “We Want a Policy” .....	194
11. Campus Sexual Harassment.....	194
12. “Don’t Be An Antennae” .....	197
13. Stealing Wallets/Bodies .....	200

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### SCENE 1: Attaba Girl, 1992

Late one evening in March 1992, a young girl and her mother boarded a bus in the busy Cairene neighborhood thoroughfare of Attaba Square. Prior to entering the bus, a young man caught the girl's eye and she smiled his way. Once on the bus, the young man, along with three other men, attacked the girl, pinning her down and raping her in front of a busload of witnesses. The passengers did not intervene, but according to the Chicago Tribune the police were able to arrest two of the rapists (Al Hayat 1992; Chicago Tribune 1992).

### SCENE 2: Black Wednesday, 2005

In May 2005, female activists congregated in front of the Press Syndicate offices in downtown Cairo to protest the referendum to amend Article 76 of the constitution. The amendment would allow a multi-party Presidential election, yet it set strict terms that made it a requirement for all candidates to obtain endorsements from within the parliament run by the National Democratic Party (NDP, of Hosni Mubarak) in order to run. Many feared the amendment only strengthened NDP control of the government and was a move by Mubarak to pave the way for his son, Gamal, to follow in the Presidency. The female protesters standing in front of the Press Syndicate that day were sexually harassed and assaulted by security forces and state-hired *baltigiyya*, or thugs. One protestor reported that some of these thugs penetrated her with their fingers. In 2011, after a five-year investigation instigated by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), the African Commission for Human and People's Rights found the Egyptian

government culpable in the mass sexual assaults of female protestors (EIPR 2011; Langohr 2013; Radwan 2011; Stacher 2005; Stilt 2006).

### SCENE 3: Eid, 2006

In October 2006, on the first day of the three-day Eid al-Fitr holiday following the end of the Islamic holy month, Ramadan, scores of young men were shut out of a downtown movie theatre showing a film directed by the now infamous director, Sobky, and featuring the well-known dancer/actress, Safinaz. In a rage, the young men began to prowl the streets of the downtown area (*wust al-balad*), sexually harassing any young women they could find. Large groups of young men harassed and assaulted smaller groups of women and girls. Video footage of this mob sexual harassment was caught on mobile phones and was widely distributed via YouTube. Mob sexual harassment has since become a yearly holiday ritual (Al-Malky 2007; Otterman 2007; Rizzo et al. 2012).

### SCENE 4: Tahrir Square, 2011-2013

In November 2012, composer and activist Yasmine el-Baramawy joined the thousands of protestors in Tahrir Square standing against the regime of the Muslim Brotherhood President, Mohamed Morsy. Before realizing it, el-Baramawy found herself surrounded by a sea of men, between the ages of 18-40, closing in on her. Some, she told Australian Women's Weekly, looked like thugs and others looked like normal people. El-Baramawy's attackers pushed, grabbed, hit, kicked, fondled her body, and cut her clothes from her body. They dragged her along the ground naked, pinned her down by her hair beneath the wheels of a car, and then tied her to the hood of the car while driving into

another nearby area. Throughout her ordeal, her attackers simultaneously told her they would protect her even as they assaulted and raped her, shouting to the crowd when they drove away with her that she had a bomb strapped to her body. According to Australian Women's Weekly, a later physical examination found that she had been penetrated anally with a knife. A group of neighborhood women rescued El-Baramawy after more than an hour (AWW 2013; Hafez 2014; Langohr 2013; yNet 2013).

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This ethnography explores the role of grassroots activism in reshaping social perceptions and behaviors around *taharrush ginsy*, or sexual harassment, in Egypt. In part, it interrogates the unfolding narrative of sexual harassment in order to make visible various constructs that have, at once, facilitated and hindered efforts to foment social change. The above scenes are instructive in this analysis. They represent well-known and frequently recounted markers in the history of public sexual violence (*al-'unf al-ginsy*) in Egypt. More specifically, these events are critical features in the emerging discourse on *taharrush ginsy* by activists and scholars, often recounted as evidence of the growing problem of *taharrush ginsy* and they highlight the range of behaviors that have been subsumed within the term “sexual harassment” in Egypt. The Attaba Girl case, along with the similar 1985 Maadi Girl case, where a young woman and her boyfriend were kidnapped and the woman raped while her boyfriend was forced to watch, made national headlines at their respective times (Dupret 2007). Both cases incited public outrage and fears of disintegrating moral values. Both have also served as almost mythic reference points in the murky development of what has been seen by activists as a long and widespread, if not endemic, problem facing Egyptian women.

Black Wednesday signified the first identifiable point in the evolving narrative of sexual harassment in Egypt when sexual violence became a problem for women in public space. More than 500 women joined in demonstrations organized by the pro-democracy movement Kefaya to stand in solidarity against the corruption of the Mubarak regime (El-Mahdi 2010; Sika 2014; Shorbagy 2007). In the protests, state hired *baltigiyya* (thugs) and state security forces sexually harassed and assaulted female protestors. State sponsored sexual violence spurred the first joint campaign bringing together activists, journalists, and Islamists to speak out against politically motivated sexual violence, referred to as “The Street is Ours,” (*al-shāra‘ linā*) and included entities such as the Egyptian Center for Women’s Right (ECWR), the Center for Egyptian Women’s Legal Aid (CEWLA), and the New Women’s Research Center (Abdelmrahman 2015; Schemm 2005). Additionally, the violence fueled the establishment of other initiatives, such the Association of Egyptian Mothers founded by Cairo University political scientist, Heba Raouf, and the National Apology Campaign to stand in solidarity with the victims of politically motivated sexual violence (Baheyra 2005; Howeidy 2005). In late 2005, ECWR founded the first community-based program focused on combatting sexual harassment in the streets, which was separate from “The Street is Ours” campaign that addressed state violence, yet was closely titled “Making Our Streets Safe for Everyone.”

The Eid mob sexual harassment was the first mass incident of public sexual violence that was videotaped and distributed online by Egyptian bloggers, Wael Abbas and Malek X (Rizzo et al. 2012). In the discourse on sexual harassment in Egypt, it has served as a critical turning point when the Egyptian public began to question whether sexual harassment was a problem within their society. According to Al-Malky (2007)



traffic on the blog sites, while comparatively small, jumped to 750 comments from 30 comments per day, 8000 views per day for Malek X, and 60,000 views of Abbas's video over a one-week period. The Eid example was not simply a case of a violent state oppressing opposition, or a political act disconnected from the wider system of social norms. Instead, it was seen as symptomatic of the widespread social practice of sexual harassment, which was, partially, enabled by an illegitimate state that was itself a harasser and that had not adequately enforced legal punishments for those who harassed. Moreover, the Eid incident has been viewed as a precursor to the mob violence that came to mar the Tahrir Square protests instigated by the January 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

With the onset of the January 25, 2011 Revolution, sexual harassment, assault and rape became more violent, and some activists have argued more prevalent, in the Tahrir Square protests (Ahmad Zaki & Abd ElHamid 2014; Hassan 2014; Tadros 2013a). Following the first anniversary of the Mohamed Mahmoud clash in November 2012, when the Egyptian state violently clamped down on protestors on Mohamed Mahmoud Street adjacent to Tahrir, activists noted a change in the collective assaults that occurred, with hundreds of men isolating and attacking lone women. Nehad Aboul Qomsan, Director of the Egyptian Center For Women's Rights (ECWR) stated, "We call them the circles of hell," which was made all the more possible with the absence of police in the square between November 2011 to July 2013 (FIDH 2014: 11). The extreme violence and impunity with which mass sexual harassment, assault and rape occurred in this period were viewed as an outgrowth of this already long, yet not fully understood, history of sexual harassment that was prevalent in the streets on a daily basis and at other protest sites. Acts of sexual violence that occurred in Tahrir Square were argued to be the

continued, yet escalating, political practice of quelling opposition at protests and in detention settings (FIDH 2015). Moreover, Tahrir has been seen as the extreme result of unfettered practices of public sexual violence in the country, prompting increased NGO activism focused on combatting the structural system of gender-based violence, as well as new forms of volunteer activism specifically targeting sexual harassment in the streets.

The ambiguities, tensions, and activism that have arisen around the narrative of these acts of sexual violence serve as the framework for this ethnographic exercise. This project examines the discursive and mobilizational practices that have configured *taharrush ginsy*, as well as the scope of activism that has sought to bring about its end, in particular ways. Situating anti-sexual harassment activism within transnational spheres of governance, where NGOs and initiatives serve as key mediators between international women's rights discourses and local norms, this dissertation further interrogates how notions of sexual violence and women's rights have been/are being contested and reshaped in the pre-and-post-Revolutionary Egyptian context. As part of this, the project investigates the strategies employed by social initiatives to fashion and promote a new vision of what constitutes sexual violence and social responsibility, as well as public understandings of *taharrush ginsy*. In so doing, this project seeks to make sense of how grassroots initiatives drive change and considers challenges to their strategic approaches.

### **Framework: Ambiguities and Tensions**

The introductory scenes above draw attention to important ambiguities that exist within the discourse of sexual harassment as a form of sexual violence in Egypt. These ambiguities provide the starting point of the ethnographic account that follows in this

dissertation. Among them are 1) the lack of clarity around, but an apparent overlap in, the social and political nature of sexual harassment, the relationship of which is critical to understand when considering social and political interventions designed to combat the problem in Egyptian society; and concomitantly, 2) a lack of clarity in how sexual harassment, as *taharrush ginsy*, is conceptualized, where its' very definition and constitutive acts are being actively negotiated within and between civil society, the public, media, and government. Exploring the tension between social and political forms of sexual harassment is of vital import, particularly when sexual harassment in either form is used as a springboard for assessing and criticizing grassroots anti-sexual harassment initiatives and their long-term impact. Moreover, new conceptualizations of *taharrush ginsy* are linked to the transnational field within which anti-sexual harassment activism occurs. New ethics on violence and criminality are being mapped onto local discourses of sexual harassment, which is diffusing unevenly into the country. This section looks first at what is social or political about *taharrush ginsy*, in Egypt, as it has been understood since Black Wednesday and since civil society activism began in 2005.

In her examination of the role of men in three “effective” initiatives working to combat sexual harassment in Egypt, Tadros (2014) argues that there are two kinds of gender-based violence in operation in the current context. Drawing on Caroline Moser’s (2001) continuum of gendered violence, which attempts to build a holistic understanding of sexual violence as having political, social and economic facets, Tadros outlines the shape of politically motivated and socially motivated assault/gender violence in the country. Accordingly, she employs Moser’s definition of socially motivated sexual violence as “violent acts committed by a desire, conscious or unconscious, for social gain

or to obtain or maintain social power. This would be manifest at the interpersonal level through spousal abuse or sexual harassment in the street by gangs, thugs or various public actors (Tadros 2014: 10, citing Moser 2001: 36). She goes on to define socially motivated sexual harassment as practices that include groping, touching, and the removal of clothing that is becoming more daring in the post-Revolutionary period (Tadros 2014: 10). This differs from politically motivated sexual violence, where the act of violence includes sexual abuse, torture and rape. Tadros asserts that this form of sexual violence is patterned, it occurs primarily in protest spaces, and it is intentionally commissioned and implemented by political entities in order to maintain political power.

The distinguishing features between both are the intentionality behind the violence, whether officially planned in a politically charged context or spontaneously (if regularly) occurring in the course of daily life, as well as accountability in who is engaging in such violence, whether the state or the average individual. There is a sense that politically motivated sexual violence, particularly in the post-2011 Revolutionary context, is somehow more violent, though perhaps not more serious, than its socially motivated counterpart, and that the attentions directed at reform should center on the political system that enables such sexual violence to continue both in the political and social spheres. Within this framework, Tadros analyzes three “effective” anti-sexual harassment initiatives, Harakat Bassma (Imprint Movement), Shoft Taharrush (I Saw Harassment), and OpAntish (Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment), whose work cuts across the socially motivated to politically motivated spectrum. Harakat Bassma and Shoft Taharrush focus their efforts largely on socially motivated street sexual harassment, though Shoft Taharrush is also actively engaged in addressing political violence in

protests, while OpAntish emerged specifically in response to the crisis of sexual assault and rape in Tahrir Square. Tadros does not provide a discussion of how socially and politically motivated sexual violence is differentially addressed by these initiatives, i.e. whether each type of sexual violence necessitates a specific set of strategic approaches, and if certain approaches are better than others in facilitating change.

It is also not clear in her discussion if these initiatives have a unique philosophical approach to ending sexual harassment and/or what makes their activities more effective than those of the other initiatives that have also sprung up. Tadros outlines several criteria for her selection of the three initiatives noted above, including that they must have 1) emerged in the post-Revolutionary period, 2) be “informal” (unregistered), 3) must focus on public sexual violence, whether the focus is on the street or the structural system, i.e. seeking legislative changes, which presumes that street activism does not challenge the structural system, 4) they must involve men in activism, 5) be ongoing and 6) be “effective,” i.e. they provide positive reinforcement, they are able to recruit many volunteers, and they also engage with the media. Within this framework, there are no explanations of why initiatives, such as Ded el-Taharrush or Tahrir Bodyguards, both of whom may be said to meet the above criteria and are equally as prominent, were not included. For that matter, the social initiative, HarassMap, was excluded, though HarassMap fails to meet one of the criteria above – they formed 3 months prior to the Revolution. Until 2015, when they formally submitted their NGO registration application, they met the other criteria and have been one of the leading entities in the fight against sexual harassment in the post-Revolutionary period. Tadros’s analysis provides very detailed and cogent examinations of the activities of Harakat Bassma,

Shoft Taharush and OpAntish, but does not explore the foundations upon which each of these entities seeks to foment sociopolitical change and upend gender inequality. A philosophical ethic, or even a theory of social change, underpinning the strategic choices made by these initiatives is missing in the discussion on effectiveness.

Tadros's analysis elides some key aspects of sexual harassment in Egypt, i.e. that the lines between politically motivated and socially motivated sexual harassment, as she has defined them, are porous. For example, activists note that socially motivated sexual violence, what Tadros (2013b) also refers to as everyday forms of sexual harassment that exists on the streets and occurs on a daily basis, is planned, especially around the holidays. The Eid example discussed above was the first in what is now a regularized practice in many of Egypt's cities - in a sense, this may be viewed as a pattern of sexual violence that occurs around the holidays (rather than protest), but is not a tactic by the state to maintain political power.

Activists, and even non-activists who are asked, widely believe that many young men learn harassing behaviors from older male family members, who might purposefully take them out to sexually harass women and girls in the street. Growing numbers of reports from victims/survivors via social media and open-source platforms also illustrate that socially and politically motivated sexual harassment are often described in similarly violent terms, and both may include physical assaults and rape. Additionally, and Tadros does note this, the line between socially motivated and politically motivated sexual assaults in the Tahrir mob attacks was often blurred. Langohr (2013) discussed Egyptian activists' beliefs early in the Revolution that mob assaults were politically commissioned. However, activists now argue that this was not singularly the case and that attacks may

have been instigated by state-hired *baltigiyya* (thugs) but average men were quick to join in the fray (Interviews Hussein El-Shafei and Amal El-Mohandes). The sheer size of the mobs that arose in Tahrir raised doubts later on that not all participants in sexual attacks and rapes were paid by the state, and that many were also opportunists.

Tadros's distinction of politically and socially motivated gender-based violence, on the one hand, attempts to clarify some of the ambiguities around sexual violence in Egypt. However, the basis of this attempt is to make visible the role of the state in perpetrating sexual violence against its female citizenry. Moser (2001) noted that sexual violence has typically been situated within the realm of the social, thus ignoring its' political and economic implications. In essence, Tadros provides a historic corrective to the problem of viewing sexual violence in Egypt as grounded solely in the everyday facets of life, which was largely the case prior to the Revolution, and argues that the state is highly implicated in acts of sexual aggression toward its' citizenry.

In her examination of the effect of political affiliations and sensitivities of average individuals on their perceptions of who was committing acts of sexual violence, she noted, "Pre-orchestrated and politically motivated sexual assault intended to [intimidate] female protestors from expressing their opposition in public spaces have been muddled with socio-economically motivated incidents of sexual harassment" (Tadros 2013b: 3).<sup>1</sup> Here, the lack of clear boundaries between socially motivated and politically motivated sexual violence in the minds of politically minded average individuals, in addition to their

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, Tadros was concerned that those who were supportive of and had voted for the Muslim Brotherhood President, Mohamed Morsi, were more inclined to victim-blame and less inclined to see the Brotherhood government as perpetrators of sexual harassment. In general, she argued that those individuals that were more supportive of Islamist politics were blinded from seeing Islamist political actors as implicated in sanctioning politically commissioned sexual violence. Instead, the Islamist rhetoric was to lay responsibility for assault on women themselves.

political bias, obscures the role of the state in reproducing this violence. In the Revolutionary context, the distinction between social and political has been vital given the way the government sought to clamp down on protests, and therefore a transition to more democratic political practices, through attacks on the respectability of female protestors (Amar 2011). This tactic represents a shift in state approaches to managing protests.<sup>2</sup> Yet, a counter-argument can be made that by distinguishing socially and politically motivated sexual violence in order to make visible the state as harasser, socially motivated sexual violence perpetrated by average individuals in the street becomes a practice derivative of state violence, i.e. the state sets an example and creates the system of impunity that, in turn, allows (maybe encourages) people to misbehave.

Missing in Tadros's analysis is an exploration of the integrated nature of socially and politically motivated sexual violence in Egypt, and consequently what this means for anti-sexual harassment activism, for which Moser (2011) advocates. She stated, "...those concerned with 'societal violence' – such as robbery, crime and gender-based violence – tend to compartmentalize their knowledge," meaning that those viewing sexual violence as socially – or even politically – motivated ignore that sexual violence is both at the same time (Moser 2011: 33). While Moser herself was concerned with sexual violence deployed in conflict situations, what can be extrapolated from her statement is that

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<sup>2</sup> Amar (2011) argues that in the pre-Revolutionary period, state tactics toward managing protest included portraying protestors as *baltigiyya*, or thugs, in a process he called the "*baltagi*-effect." Using the rhetoric of thugs undermining the national security of the country, the state could suppress protestors through arrests and detention. In the post-Revolutionary period, the expansive participation of women in protests made it challenging for the state to claim that protests were largely comprised of thugs. Amar argues that the state instead used thugs to push women from protest by attacking their respectability through sexual harassment, assault and rape. What is not clear is if the state assumed that pushing women from protest would suppress Revolutionary protest overall, or if pushing women out of protest would then allow them to revert to the tactic of managing largely male dominated protests through the *baltagi* effect.



looking at sexual violence as either strictly social or political (or economic) obscures the linkages between them.

Tadros argues that both social and political forms of gender-based violence stem from the same system of norms and values that informs behavior, and that both ultimately serve to maintain patriarchal power. It may be possible to say that delineating the realms within which sexual violence occurs, whether social or political, are crucial in order to devise appropriate strategies to bringing about a reduction or an end to their occurrence within each realm. On the other hand, distinguishing forms of gender violence along a social and political axis is problematic and reinforces a fissure between the social and political spheres. By separating sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence along social or political lines, this in turn emphasizes the social and political as separate, rather than mutually constitutive, worlds. More importantly, such distinctions, which are intended to highlight state transgressions, ascribe primacy to the political sphere in forging social and cultural practices. This fissure complicates how grassroots anti-sexual harassment interventions, focused largely on the socially motivated, everyday forms of sexual harassment rather than the politically motivated forms of sexual violence, are also politically engaged, i.e. that their social interventions are political.

This dual system of sexual violence in Egypt does not account for anti-sexual harassment interventions that take place and generate changes within overlapping social and political fields. Moreover, the fissure that separates socially and politically motivated sexual violence has helped to generate criticisms of some anti-sexual harassment activism. As will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, there is a belief that some anti-sexual harassment activism has failed to address the structural system of

gender-based violence by failing to hold the state accountable for its use of sexual violence and that civil society entities, by focusing on everyday street sexual harassment, are complicit in reproducing neocolonial notions of unruly Arab men (Abu Lughod 2013; Amar 2011)<sup>3</sup>. Such forms of activism are not viewed as complementary to political advocacy that is typical of women's rights NGOs (al-Ali 2000). This criticism of anti-sexual harassment efforts overlooks key contextual factors and internal dynamics among social/political actors within Egyptian NGOs and initiatives that influenced the choices of anti-sexual harassment activists, as well as the changes this activism has gone through between 2005 to today. This ethnography seeks to provide greater insight into some of these issues and to problematize the social/political distinction of sexual violence.

Differences in how *taharrush ginsy* is defined and the shifting terminological borders around everyday sexually harassing acts (typically identified with a range of behaviors like catcalls, stares, following, touching) and assault and rape serves as another area of ambiguity made evident in the introductory scenes. While it may seem a rather dubious, and perhaps even unnecessary, task to make distinctions between various forms of sexual violence, this dissertation argues that it is, in fact, a crucial tension that must be explored, side by side with notions of socially and politically motivated sexual violence, in order to better understand the continued divergence between civil society and public conceptions of sexual harassment. Much of the anti-sexual harassment discourse prevalent in civil society identifies sexual assault and rape, which feature prominently as

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<sup>3</sup> Amar notes how media representations of frenzied mobs of Arab men, particularly with the attack on CBS correspondent Lara Logan, drew on "Orientalist tropes of the 'Arab Street,'" in which Arab men were portrayed as predatory and undisciplined (2011: 301). Asef Bayat's (2003) more detailed discussion of the "Arab Street," which Amar references, argues that the "Arab Street" had become code in Western media and political spheres for "an abnormal mindset, as well as a strange place filled with angry people" and which was "almost exclusively described in terms of 'mobs, riots, and revolts.'"

aspects of politically motivated sexual violence, and every-day forms of sexual harassment in the street as equivalent in severity and subsumes them both within the terminological rubric of *taḥarrush ginsy*. In other words, the conflation of very violent forms of sexual assault and rape with far less violent everyday harassment as *taḥarrush* creates a conceptual conflict for the public that do not see equivalency between the two. Additionally, since the Revolution, *taḥarrush* has been used synonymously with ‘*atadā el-ginsy*’ (sexual assault), *el-‘unf el-ginsy*’ (sexual violence), within civil society and the media, contributing to public resistance to conceptualizations of *taḥarrush* as including everyday behaviors and as a crime.

Associated with this conceptual conflict between civil society and public definitions of sexual harassment are the transnational norms and values that infuse civil society discourses. ECWR, in some of the initial civil society research that was conducted on the phenomenon of street sexual harassment in Egypt, defined it as “unwanted sexual conduct deliberately perpetrated by the harasser, resulting in sexual, physical, or psychological abuse of the victim, regardless of location...” (Hassan et al. 2008). In a conference report, ECWR stressed sexual harassment to be primarily a social and psychological phenomenon, though they claimed it did have other dimensions (Aboul Qomsan 2009). They did not include rape, sexual assault, or mob assault in their list of actions that constituted sexual harassment (despite the fact that their two reports were issued well after the first Eid mob harassment that took place in 2006), nor did they focus on politically motivated violence, but specifically highlighted the uneven relations of power within which sexual harassment is embedded. This definition of sexual harassment as an uneven arrangement of power, where men were able to target women for sexual

harassment, mirrored that of American and, to some extent, European feminist arguments that sexual harassment is a form of gendered power, or sex discrimination that violates women's economic rights (Bakker 2007; Zippel 2006).

The definition of sexual harassment promoted by the social initiative, HarassMap, which launched in late 2010, more directly pulled from UN definitions (and was, in fact, taken from the UN website), that similarly stated:

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome words and/or actions of a sexual nature that violate a person's body, privacy, or feelings and make that person feel uncomfortable, threatened, insecure, scared, disrespected, startled, insulted, intimidated, abused, offended, or objectified. Sexual harassment can take many different forms and include one or more types at one time: ogling, facial expressions, catcalls, comments, stalking or following, sexual invites, unwanted attention, sexual photos, online (harassment), phone calls, touching, indecent exposure, threats, sexual assault, rape, mob attacks (HarassMap 2014).

The inclusion of assault, rape and mob attacks occurred as a result of the Revolution.

Their website goes on to call all forms of sexual harassment a crime. The feminist group, Nazra for Feminist Studies, employed HarassMap's definition of sexual harassment in a document generated for the joint campaign, *ṣallaḥha fī dimāghak* (Fix It In Your Head/Get It Right), which was conducted during the International 16 Days of Activism to Combat Gender Violence from November 25-December 8, 2013. Nazra's use of the definition, however, was amended to exclude sexual assault, rape, and mob attacks. The goal of the *ṣallaḥha* campaign, at least for participating groups like HarassMap, was to clarify terminologies, where anti-sexual harassment efforts sought to highlight *taḥarrush* as simply everyday sexual harassment separate from sexual assault and rape.

These definitions hint at how anti-sexual harassment activism engages with transnational fields in order to effect change on the ground. A wealth of literature exists on the role of NGOs and civil society entities in mediating transnational rights based

discourses, serving as norm entrepreneurs and as critical entities that facilitate the norm socialization process (Starchursky 2013; Finnemore & Sikkink 1998; Risse & Sikkink 1999). A more thorough discussion of these concepts will follow in Chapter 3, however, of import here is that NGOs and other civil society initiatives are theorized as operating in a middle space that helps to connect global and local systems of norms. A number of social scientists argue that certain discursive framing practices aide in this process, including resonance, radicalization and vernacularization (Feree 2003; Levitt and Merry 2009). However, those examining these processes largely view domestic socialization in relation to legal structures and the way in which states adopt more equalizing and democratic principles with respect to human and women's rights. Here, domestic socialization is often synonymous with legal reform, whereby changes in legal structures somehow impacts changes in cultural practice. In this vein, social change is frequently analyzed as a top-down process.

Egyptian anti-sexual harassment NGOs and initiatives have long been engaged with transnational human rights regimes in how they have conceived of and defined sexual harassment, as well as new social norms around sexual harassment. The framing of sexual harassment as violating/a violation, a power imbalance, and, most importantly, a crime, intersects with globalized perspectives that increasingly place violence against women at the forefront of transnational women's rights activism (Merry 2006 & 2009). An important aspect of this global activism is promoting more equitable politico-legal frameworks and state adherence to international conventions, such as CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women). With respect to this, Hassan et al (2008) and Rizzo et al. (2012), in their detailed examination

of the ECWR campaign, also noted additional frames in Egyptian anti-sexual harassment activism that focus on security and the responsibility of the state in ensuring both legal protections and police protection in the street. Such frames have been very prevalent in much of the activism that has occurred since the Tahrir attacks began.

Despite this activism, how civil society frames and discourses have both drawn on and redefined localized notions of sexual harassment, namely how *taharrush ginsy* became the sexual harassment recognizable today, has not been explored. Activities, events, and even strategic approaches have been highlighted for a number of NGOs and initiatives, namely ECWR, HarassMap, Shoft Taharrush, and Harakat Bassma, which are often examined independent of the larger scope and history of the movement against sexual harassment itself, and are increasingly conducted within the framework of revolution, state violence, and technological activism. Yet, the *process* of norm mediation and the decisions made by anti-sexual harassment actors with respect to building and promoting new social norms, and mobilizing for change is still unclear. This project draws on theories of international norm mediation to address these processes and interrogates how anti-sexual harassment activism is constructing sexual harassment in particular ways. Along with this is a focus on bottom-up forms of change that emphasizes how grassroots anti-sexual harassment initiatives are attempting to refashion social perceptions and behaviors.

In addition, this ethnographic analysis interrogates how the Egyptian public has understood *taharrush ginsy* over time and how this coheres, or not, with civil society frames of *taharrush*. As evidenced by the definitions above, the differing actions connected with sexual harassment are not consistent between civil society organizations,

nor have they been uniform over time. Regarding HarassMap's inclusion of sexual assault, rape and mob harassment in their definition of sexual harassment, this occurred not because HarassMap activists lack any vision for distinctions or boundaries between various sexually violent behaviors. In fact, HarassMap was a joint partner, along with Nazra for Feminist Studies, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), and Tahrir Bodyguard, in the *ṣallahha fi dimāghak* campaign. As already noted, the purpose of *ṣallahha fi dimāghak* was to solidify definitions and more concretely delineate what was and was not *taḥarrush ginsy*. However, HarassMap's claim to fame, so to speak, was their open-source crowd-map, powered by Ushahidi (Howe 2006). HarassMap was one of the first to employ this form of technology to a social/political problem in Egypt<sup>4</sup>, and certainly one of the first in the world to do so for a longstanding problem and not a crisis situation, for which the potential of crowd-mapping was lauded (Goodchild 2010; Hester et al. 2010; Kahl et al. 2012). Because of this, HarassMap sought to utilize their crowd-map to give victims/survivors of multiple forms of sexual violence a means to speak up and voice their experiences.

Despite this, HarassMap's incorporation of these multiple forms of sexual violence through their online platform both reflects and helps to reproduce continued public confusion of what constitutes *taḥarrush ginsy*, as well as continued denial that *taḥarrush ginsy* represents a real societal problem. In the Attaba Girl case, the article that appeared in Wasat Magazine in 1992, archived online by the Saudi owned Al Hayat

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<sup>4</sup> See Meier 2011 for a discussion of U-Shahid, the first open-source platform to map political corruption in Egypt. U-Shahid also employed Ushahidi technology and launched operations months prior to HarassMap, though HarassMap began talks with their technological partner, Nijel, about implementing a crowdmap to map sexual harassment in Egypt in 2008, and spent 2009-2010 in developing and financing a crowdmap project.

news, interchangeably utilized the terms *taḥarrush*, ‘*atadā*’ (assault), and *ightaṣab* (rape) to describe the attack on the young girl. Here, there was no separation between these three terms; the use of *taḥarrush* was synonymous with the use of *ightaṣab* (rape). Since the Revolution, articles exploring the historic trajectory of *taḥarrush ginsy* and public sexual violence from Attaba to Tahrir are sometimes more careful in terminological use, but the Attaba rape still marks the first referenced and much discussed case of *taḥarrush ginsy* in Egypt (HarassMap FB 2013; Montasir 2012). The examples at the beginning of this chapter all highlight how differing forms of violence tell the story of *taḥarrush ginsy* in Egypt, which was starkly visible in numerous workshops and press conferences that took place during the course of the research for this project. Likewise, the array of sexually violent behaviors that were prevalent in Tahrir Square is an essential part of how *taḥarrush ginsy* is understood. In many ways, whether intended (and wanted) or not by activists, the story of sexual violence – all forms of this - has become the story of *taḥarrush ginsy* in Egypt.

While NGOs focused more broadly on gender-based violence and political advocacy strive to separate the different forms of sexual violence, such work is challenged by historic understandings of the terms that have come into play in anti-sexual harassment activism. This ethnographic account, therefore, additionally investigates public perceptions of *taḥarrush ginsy* and where these perceptions do or do not align with civil society discourses. Furthermore, it explores the conceptual shifts around the term *taḥarrush ginsy* and links such shifts both to various highly publicized events, as well as to the transnationally inspired activism of the NGOs and initiatives most active in anti-sexual harassment work.



## Research Questions

Three research questions were central in the design and data collection process of this ethnographic project. Each question engages with the ambiguities and tensions detailed in the discussion above to provide a picture of how grassroots activism is shaping new notions of *taharrush ginsy*, promoting it as a problem in Egyptian society, and then devising strategies to combat it. These question include:

1. How do anti-sexual harassment organizations talk about sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in training sessions, workshops, information sessions, reports and various media outlets/forums?

This question arose primarily to explore the way in which NGOs and social initiatives working to combat sexual harassment engaged with transnational human and women's rights regimes, and how new discourses around women's rights and sexual violence were constructed within the local sociocultural and political context of both pre and post-Revolution Egypt. How do the transnational and local intersect in new conceptualizations of *taharrush ginsy*? In particular, this question investigates the discursive practices of anti-sexual harassment organizations and the framing techniques - not just the frames themselves - employed to better understand the process of conceptual reformulation with respect to sexual harassment. Underpinning this question is a critical need to understand how sexual harassment is constructed as a violent practice in Egypt and what this has meant for women's access to public spaces.

2. How do anti-sexual harassment organizations mobilize the public against sexual harassment?

A number of the key ambiguities/tensions discussed above serve as the foundation for this question. It addresses not only the deployment of new discourses of sexual harassment to change social perceptions, but also the tangible activities that anti-sexual harassment organizations engage in to change social behaviors. The question explores both the social and political dimensions of anti-sexual harassment activism and considers why such distinctions are problematic, without specific consideration of how they are integrated. Included here is an examination of the targets of anti-sexual harassment activism and key philosophical and strategic approaches to combat the problem. Moreover, along with the first research question, this question attempts to make visible how anti-sexual harassment initiatives actively implement transnationally informed programs and activities, circulate new definitions of sexual harassment, and motivate people to act in ways that run counter to historic values and norms.

3. How do local people understand sexual harassment, or *taharrush ginsy*, and how does their understanding align with, or conflict with, the discourses of anti-sexual harassment organizations?

This question is directed at the ambiguities inherent in the various meanings and uses of the term *taharrush ginsy*, and at how local people have employed the term over time. The question probes into historic frames around *taharrush ginsy* that anti-sexual harassment

organizations have drawn on and/or challenged in order to reshape norms, perceptions and behaviors. These historic frames are critical, as they also shape the tensions that exist between civil society entities and the public, as anti-sexual harassment organizations have sought to reformulate social norms. Included here is an analysis of how local people define and talk about *taḥarrush ginsy*, and where civil society and public discourses may or may not overlap with each other. One caveat to note here is that this question does not examine if civil society discourses are causally linked in shaping public perceptions, per se. However, knowing how the public perceives *taḥarrush ginsy* will provide insight on whether civil society mediated discourses are visible in Egyptian society and how public sentiments may diverge from that of anti-sexual harassment groups.

In the course of field research, additional questions arose. These are important for understanding not only the construction of sexual harassment as a problem in Egyptian civil society discourses, and Egyptian society overall, but also for serving as the framework for situating anti-sexual harassment activism. The analysis in this dissertation seeks to also address these questions:

1. What social, economic and political factors have been expressed as contributing to the growth of the problem of sexual harassment in Egypt?
2. How did the Revolution impact both discourses and activism around sexual harassment?
3. What is the relationship of *taḥarrush ginsy* with other terminologies that fall within the rubric of sexual violence, in particular *mu'ākṣa* (flirtation)?
4. How do sexual harassment norms, both historic and newly constructed, cohere with the structural system of gender norms in Egypt?

## **Methodological Approach**

Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted over one year, between 2013-2014, on location in Cairo, Egypt. Multiple methodological approaches were undertaken in an effort to explore the research questions outlined above.

### *Participant Observation*

In the design of this research, the original goal was to conduct participant observation with three NGOs and/or social initiatives most active in anti-sexual harassment work and to compare discourses and strategies. Early in the research process it became apparent that many of the NGOs with gender-violence programs were either not very active on the issue of sexual harassment or they did not have specific programming agendas with respect to sexual harassment. For instance, prior to my arrival in Cairo, I contacted ECWR and received tentative approval for research with their organization. However, through various conversations with anti-sexual harassment activists following arrival in country, including the most recent (former) project manager of ECWR's sexual harassment program, it became clear that ECWR's program, which essentially started the civil society movement against this problem, had become inactive. The downsizing of staff, including the loss of key individuals that previously started and managed the program, contributed to a decline in ECWR's preeminence in anti-sexual harassment work.

Additionally, Nazra for Feminist Studies and the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) were both approached. Nazra has been active on the issue of gender violence, yet their work overall has focused on supporting local women human rights

defenders (WHRDs). This work only nominally included sexual harassment. The work that did occur on sexual harassment took place during joint ventures or was focused more specifically on the politically motivated sexual violence that occurred in Tahrir during the three years of protest. Moreover, Nazra maintained a strict privacy policy to protect the identities of individuals that participated in programming and/or provided testimonies about their experiences of sexual violence. Because of this, they did not allow ethnographers to observe operations. Similarly, at the time of this research, EIPR's gender program consisted of a single individual, and the scope of this individual's work went beyond sexual harassment. Like Nazra, EIPR often participated in joint activities focused on sexual harassment, but they did not run specific activities to combat the problem in Egypt.

My primary site of participant observation, therefore, was with the independent initiative, HarassMap. Launched in October 2010, HarassMap has been the preeminent initiative focused solely on combatting sexual harassment in Egypt. It was co-founded by four individuals, three of whom had been former employees at ECWR. These three individuals founded and ran ECWR's sexual harassment program until 2008, when two of them separated from ECWR over differences that arose in the running of the program. HarassMap, in some ways, grew out of ECWR work, but in other ways moved beyond what ECWR would have been capable of and interested in. In addition to this, some amount of participant observation was also possible with the volunteer initiative, Ded El-Taharrush (Anti-Sexual Harassment Movement), which was closely aligned with HarassMap. Ded el-Taharrush's founder was a HarassMap employee. HarassMap also served as a consultant in the formation of Ded el-Taharrush, and many of the ventures

undertaken by Ded el-Taharrush occurred in collaboration with HarassMap. Having said that, Ded el-Taharrush maintained a different philosophical approach to anti-sexual harassment work, and members were not eager to be seen as an extension of HarassMap. Observation opportunities, however, were not regularized with Ded el-Taharrush and occurred only when notifications of meetings and events were provided.

It is important to note here that participant observation within NGOs has been a frequent occurrence for anthropologists, however, there has been little theorizing about best practices in the way such work should be conducted. In her discussion of the ethnography of NGOs, Markowitz (2001) emphasized her approach of “following the project” and exploring how and why projects evolve over time, as well as searching for links with other organizations or entities. However, this approach is predicated on work within an NGO that maintains a suite of different programs that may not all focus on the same issue. In the Egyptian case, women’s rights NGOs usually run multiple programs that do not all center on gender-based violence. For instance, ECWR’s main platform was the political participation of women at all levels, from local councils to national government. Yet, they also operated programs focused on raising awareness around female genital mutilation/circumcision (FGM/C), running legal clinics, and providing access to basic services. Nazra for Feminist Studies also runs multiple programs, including advocacy, documentation, networking, and research, to support women human rights defenders, combat gender based violence, and build a feminist movement in Egypt. EIPR is organized into four main units, which include Civil Liberties, Criminal Justice, Economic and Social Justice, and Democracy and Political Rights. Their gender program

falls within the Civil Liberties unit. Each of these NGOs works across numerous issue areas, and fit well within the type of NGOs Markowitz referred to in her paper.

HarassMap, on the other hand, is one of the few single-issue entities to have arisen in Egypt's civil society. The entire organization revolves around combatting sexual harassment. Toward that end, they developed four main units, each of which is responsible for differing facets of combatting sexual harassment. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Suffice to say, this generated an initial confusion and lack of certainty in how to begin the process of participant observation. Many of the staff members did not work from HarassMap's offices on any regularized schedule, except for one day a week when everyone was required to attend a mandatory staff meeting. Much of their work was completed off-site in coffee shops, at home, or in the offices of other entities (partners and collaborators). Even when in the office, it was unclear what access there would be to meetings. Moreover, despite HarassMap being known for their open door policy with respect to community volunteers participating in various programmatic activities, there was initial distrust from some staff members regarding the presence of a foreign researcher hanging around the office, watching and asking questions. Other staff members appeared to have little concern with this.

The approach to participant observation undertaken was a modified version of Markowitz's "follow the project," whereby I instead "followed the units" within HarassMap. Staff meetings became a regular feature of the observation process, as well as any and all other meetings that each unit allowed. Observations took place in cross-unit meetings and even external meetings with partners and collaborators that I was given permission to attend. I attended all activities and events that were organized by individual

units and/or jointly by multiple units, or that differing units were invited to participate in by other entities. For instance, I observed street outreach days that were within the purview of the Community Outreach Unit, the marketing focus group sessions that were organized by the Marketing and Communications Unit, the research focus groups operated by the Research Unit, university training sessions run by the Safe Areas unit, as well as the HarassMap Training Academies that were joint ventures between all units to train new community captains, and more. Through this approach, I got to know the inner workings of the individual units, how they collaborated with each other and external partners, as well as the tensions that exist between them. Such an approach allowed me to explore the factors that informed strategic approaches, decision-making, messaging, as well as the areas of coherence and incoherence in the development of anti-sexual harassment discourse and praxis.

Additionally, upon beginning participant observation, I was immediately enlisted by HarassMap to provide assistance on a number of projects that had become problematic for them. Namely, I was asked to work with the Research Unit on their second and third annual reports; the second having problems with data quantified from their open source map, and the third needing analysis and write-up. Similarly, I was asked to meet with all units and write-up a preliminary mid-term evaluation for the International Development and Research Center (IDRC), whose funding had provided for staff salaries. At a later point, I was also asked to become an official research consultant with HarassMap on an IDRC funded study, which examined the use of crowdsourcing (or open sourcing) as a viable data collection strategy for sensitive topics. This project comparatively examined data generated from crowdsourcing, surveys, interviews and focus groups to determine



whether the anonymity provided by crowdsourcing facilitated the submission of more sensitive information about sexual harassment by individuals, versus in person methods. This degree of involvement in HarassMap generated another set of tensions for me: 1) would my participation as a volunteer or a paid consultant compromise my ability to remain as objective as possible, and 2) would my participation influence the operation of activities and events such that it would compromise my data set?

Questions about the ethics of becoming too involved, in many ways of seeing myself as an actual staff member versus a researcher, and the cost of the access that my insider status afforded me once I became a consultant weighed on me throughout the course of the data collection process. In his discussion of ethical concerns that arose in the course of carrying out participant observation as an ambulance worker, O'Neill (2001) recounted his own fears about the nature of his responsibility to the patients that he was interacting with. He described one incident where he and his informant EMTs responded to an emergency at a home where a newborn infant had stopped breathing. He provided assistance to the other EMTs throughout the process of pre-arrival prepping, assisting the infant, and then transporting the infant to this hospital, but began to question his methodological approach in the face of the extreme health situations to which he was a witness, i.e. would he be interfering and/or contributing to serious mistakes that could cost lives? O'Neill's concerns had far more serious implications than mine, but his resolution to this question of responsibility was instructive: "Whatever my roles or responsibilities as a researcher these were secondary to my roles and responsibilities as a human being" (2001: 227). Similarly, I asked myself throughout the participant observation process, where I could help, shouldn't I? Was it appropriate to just observe

and not also “give back?” Ultimately, my resolution to these questions was that giving back to HarassMap was thoroughly appropriate, given the way in which the team welcomed me into their fold. Moreover, the activities I was asked to engage in were not those that would, in any way, contribute to or alter programs, practice or messaging.

### *Semi-Structured Interviews*

I conducted semi-structured interviews between December 2013 and March 2014. Because original plans for participant observation did not occur as intended, interviews became an important avenue through which to learn more about programs, activities, strategic approaches, philosophical underpinnings of anti-sexual harassment work, targets, donor funding, and collaborations between anti-sexual harassment entities. Additionally, interviews provided details about the history of sexual harassment activism, personal reflections about the political, economic, and social milieu within which sexual harassment was occurring, and even the personal histories of the individuals themselves, i.e. what motivated them to become involved in such work. Interviews were carried out in both English and/or Arabic, depending on the preference of the activist interviewed. The choice to use English for interviews with activists was decided upon because much of the activism that was occurring on the issue also took place in English<sup>5</sup>. Often, campaigns were dually conducted in English and Arabic, and in the case of HarassMap at the time of this research much work started in English and was then translated into Arabic.

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<sup>5</sup> Most activists working in civil society were fluent in English, which may support analyses of the class-based nature of civil society activism, where activists came from privileged families and, often, obtained advanced degrees from abroad (Abdelrahman 2004). However, even when conducted in English, interviews and personal conversations were inevitably laced with Arabic to discuss many of the ideas and concepts circulating on the issue of sexual harassment and gender violence.

A total of 23 interviews were conducted with activists working in NGOs, initiatives and even government agencies central to anti-sexual harassment work. In some cases, individuals that were approached did not follow through with interview scheduling, but most had become used to being interviewed and did not have a problem with it. Activists that were interviewed were members or affiliated with the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR), HarassMap, Nazra for Feminist Studies, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, the Nadeem Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture, Ded el-Taharrush (Anti-Sexual Harassment Movement), Harakat Bassma (Imprint Movement), Shoft Taharrush (I Saw Harassment), Tahrir Bodyguards, Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, Thawrat Al-Banette (Girl's Revolution), The National Council for Women's Ombudsman's Office, and Tahrir Academy. In terms of the sampling within each organization, most HarassMap members were interviewed. Otherwise, directors, program managers, and individuals that were responsible for sexual harassment work were approached and interviewed. The sample includes many of the key players in anti-sexual harassment work in Egypt.

### *Surveys*

Neighborhood surveys were conducted in order to derive information on public perceptions of *taharrush ginsy* for comparison with civil society discourses on sexual harassment. A convenience sample was taken of three communities in the Cairo metropolitan area, which provided culturally rich data on perceptions of sexual violence along a number of theoretically informed lines. The choice of a convenience sample was made because random samples within neighborhoods are difficult to obtain in Cairo.

Census information and even neighborhood maps are notoriously difficult to locate in Egypt, especially for informal areas of the city where there are no known state accounting of residences (Elyachar 2003). Moreover, snowball samples of neighborhoods would have required assistance from NGOs that would have located willing participants. An approach relying on NGOs would have generated a sampling bias that, in turn, might have compromised any comparative analysis of NGO and public discourses of sexual harassment. Instead, smaller cross-sections of the city were chosen and a venue-based convenience sample was taken in order to test for variation in perceptions between genders, age groups, and class. Three target neighborhoods were chosen based on socioeconomic level in order to control for class. These are as follows:

Masakan Zilzal, Low Income – Masakan Zilzal is a lower socioeconomic neighborhood in the southwest Cairene area of Qatamiyya (sometimes spelled Katemeya). Qatamiyya itself is a large area that straddles the outskirts of Cairo and the 5<sup>th</sup> settlement area (*el-tagamm'u el-khāmis*) of New Cairo, where the new American University in Cairo (AUC) campus exists. Because of its sheer size, Qatamiyya is comprised of smaller neighborhoods that run the socioeconomic gamut, from poor to conspicuously wealthy. Masakan Zilzal is one such poor neighborhood that borders another famous (or infamous) informal Cairene area, Manshiyet Nasr. Manshiyet Nasr has been well-known for both its unregulated housing, which has made headlines in Egypt over the years for various building collapses, as well as for housing the, essentially, low-caste population of *zabālīn* (garbage collectors).

The original intention of this project was to work inside of Manshiyet Nasr. However, a number of reasons precipitated a slight change in venue. One of these reasons was that this project employed field team members to collect the surveys in the street, both males and females to speak to male and female respondents. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, and what had been witnessed among NGOs and initiatives of not wanting the issue to be seen as one inspired by Western discourses, it was decided that dissociating the street surveys from, minimally, the visual presence of a foreign researcher would be prudent. This was done to facilitate more honest survey responses from respondents. As part of this, field team members were chosen from both professional research and non-professional backgrounds. Those that had non-professional backgrounds were asked to work in their home neighborhoods. The male fieldworker chosen to work in the low-income area was from Qatamiyya and knew Masakan Zilzal well. The female fieldworker was a graduate student and professional researcher. The two worked together to collect street surveys from neighborhood residents.

Additionally, there were some safety concerns working in Manshiyet Nasr, given that the informal nature of the area also meant, in some cases, the lack of paved roads and sanitary conditions. Masakan Zilzal presented itself as a better alternative, given that its residents were similarly economically disadvantaged, yet the neighborhood was slightly more regulated, meaning that the roads were paved with most of the buildings likely constructed along approved city codes (though even in many formal neighborhoods in Cairo, illegal building was/is common). There was more of a sense of security for the field team going into Masakan Zilzal versus Manshiyet Nasr. The change did not negatively impact research goals, so it was made accordingly.

Shubra Masr, Middle Income – Like Qatamiyya, Shubra is similarly a very large area to the north of Cairo, bridging the downtown area with the outskirts of the city heading toward the Nile Delta governorates of Qalyubiyah (technically still considered part of Greater Cairo), Sharqiyah and Ismailia. Like Qatamiyya, Shubra also maintains distinct neighborhoods that crosscut class, though it does not contain the same very wealthy neighborhoods of Qatamiyya. Toward the north, in Shubra Al-Khayma, which is fairly industrial, many of the residents originated from the Delta cities and settled in the area, maintaining ties to both Cairo and their smaller home cities or villages in the Delta. For the purposes of this research, Shubra Masr, closer to downtown, was chosen at the suggestion of research colleagues at HarassMap. It represented the more middle income, working to professional class residents that were called for in the research design of this project. Professional fieldworkers were hired from the Cairo office of the Population Council to complete the street surveys in this neighborhood.

Masr El-Gedida (Heliopolis), Upper Income – Masr El-Gedida is a wealthy neighborhood located to the northwest of Cairo, near the Cairo International Airport. Unlike Qatamiyya and Shubra, Heliopolis was vastly different in that it had been a historically master-planned suburb, designed for the wealthiest of Egypt's local and ex-patriot residents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its main architect was a European businessman who styled Heliopolis, in many ways, after the capitals of Europe. Colonial architecture with high walls and domed facades, wide avenues lined by trees, and a system of turn-arounds connecting streets in concentric rings, feature large in this neighborhood. Moreover, the current presidential palace, and the facilities of the military and many other official agencies are located in

Heliopolis. Residents of Heliopolis are more privileged than their neighbors in Shubra Masr and Masakan Zilzal.

In the original design of this project, the intention was to survey the upper income area of Zamalek. As with the lower income area of Manshiyet Nasr, a change in venue was decided upon based on the feedback of fieldworkers. Located on Gezira Island, Zamalek, like Heliopolis, has been home to Cairo's wealthiest. It has also been home to many embassies and ex-patriots, including foreign students renting apartments or living in the dormitories maintained in the neighborhood by AUC. Neighborhood streets are much more narrow, winding, and also quiet, without the bustling activity noticeable in Heliopolis. The largest question identified by fieldworkers would be their ability to simply locate people on the street without frequenting coffee shops or bookstores. Fieldworkers felt that Heliopolis would be somewhat easier to work in. Again, since the socioeconomic levels of the neighborhoods were commensurate, the change in venue was made to ensure the adequate collection of street surveys.

In addition to controlling for class, surveys also controlled for gender and age. In each neighborhood, surveys were distributed equally to men and women. Moreover, two age groupings were decided upon. General groupings of "young" and "older" were chosen, where young corresponded to ages 18-25 and older to 26-40. These age groupings were decided, loosely, upon age groupings that were noted in the Population Council's Survey of Young People (SYPE 2011). The research team at HarassMap employed these SYPE age groupings in their study on crowdsourcing. HarassMap's age groups, however, were broken into five-year increments. Considering the smaller sample taken for this project versus HarassMap's project, as well as time limitations on data

collection, age groupings in five-year increments were not possible. Moreover, HarassMap included individuals under age 18 in their study, whereas this project had not sought IRB permissions to work with underage youth. For this reason, age groupings were conglomerated into the two main categories noted above.

A total of 156 paper surveys were collected across all neighborhoods. In each neighborhood, that was 52 surveys, 26 of which derived from men, and 26 from women. Among men and women, 13 each were collected for each age grouping. The table below provides a visualization of the sampling distribution:

Total Number of Surveys = 156											
Masakan Zilzal = 52				Shubra Masr = 52				Masr El-Gedida = 52			
Males = 26		Females = 26		Males = 26		Females = 26		Males = 26		Females = 26	
Young = 13	Older = 13	Young = 13	Older = 13	Young = 13	Older = 13	Young = 13	Older = 13	Young = 13	Older = 13	Young = 13	Older = 13

Guest et al. (2006) found that a sample size of 13 is sufficient to detect key themes from open-ended interview data. As a form of structured interviews, Guest et al.'s findings are equally applicable to surveys. Thus, it was determined that the proposed sample size was large enough to detect differences in themes *within* and *across* neighborhoods, as well as *across* class, age and gender. Additionally, it is important to note that on the advice of HarassMap colleagues, having a manageable number of open-ended surveys would make analysis less time consuming and feasible within the timeframe of this research.

Surveys were anonymous. However, it was important to voice record them. There was one critical reason for this, related to this researcher's limitations. All surveys were conducted in Arabic. While my ability to speak colloquial Arabic was sufficient to carry out interviews and observe at trainings, meetings, and other events, I did not have the ability to read handwritten print in Arabic. A system needed to be developed to obtain



people's comments in a digital format to facilitate the analysis of surveys, as well as to maintain the integrity of the research design, which called for a convenience sample. Moreover, asking people in the street to stop for more than a few minutes to fill out a paper survey about sexual harassment was not feasible, given that people were on the go and would likely be impatient. Surveys contained ten open-ended questions. Asking people to write out their responses would likely have taken an excess of ten minutes, in addition to not being legible for this researcher. Also, asking field team members to write out participant responses would have contributed to interviewer bias, and legibility would still have been an issue in this case. Instead, I decided that the field team members would only survey those willing to be voice recorded (personal identifiers were not asked of these participants). Following the taped survey interviews, field team members then transcribed them into Word. Each 5-7 minute survey resulted in 20-30 minutes of transcription time and 1-2 pages of text.

### *Archival Data*

Data generated from Arabic discussion boards, social media forums, and blog sites provided a longitudinal view of public perceptions and terminological uses around *taḥarrush ginsy*. Here, online spaces where discussions about *taḥarrush ginsy* occurred were used as a proxy to obtain historic information on people's opinions, thoughts, and fears around sexual harassment, as well as the changing nature of the conversations on the issue. Online data was intended to better understand the discursive evolution around sexual harassment and how transnationally inspired civil society activism impacted the shape of this discourse. Toward this end, it was critical to collect information that

spanned the period prior to the beginning of anti-sexual harassment activism in 2005, as well as after. This allowed for a view of prevalent themes around the use of the term *taḥarrush ginsy*, shifting terminological use over time, as well as the identification of points in time where shifts occurred and possible factors contributing to those shifts.

Data for a twelve year time period, 2000-2012, was collected. Search terms that were utilized in this endeavor were, specifically, “*el taḥarrush el-ginsy*” and “*taḥarrush*.” The use of “*taḥarrush*” (harassment) without the qualifying “*al-ginsy*” (sexual) was also used to explore whether the historic use of *taḥarrush* could include discussions of a sexual nature (as opposed to other forms of non-sexualized harassment, such as police harassment). Unfortunately, paid search tools that have been developed for media analysts to crawl through social media forums were not available for this part of the project. Therefore, Google was employed as the primary (and free) search engine to locate discussion board and blog posts. Google had the advantage of being more powerful than other search engines for crawling the deep web, while also allowing for the refinement of searches (Madhavan et al. 2008). Searches were completed in a year-by-year fashion. When this part of the project initially started, it was possible to use search functions to locate just the discussion board and blog sites. At the end of 2013, Google updated its search functions. Following this change, searches pulled from the entire web and hits had to be individually reviewed to ensure that they derived from a discussion board or blog site, and that they were the posts of individuals expressing their personal views on *taḥarrush ginsy*. All posts were logged into a spreadsheet and the post itself was copied and pasted into a separate Word document. This allowed for greater ease later on with respect to coding and analysis. When all posts were entered into the spreadsheet,

a second search was run just on the discussion forum sites that were well represented in the posts that already been pulled. Five Egyptian discussion forum sites were crawled to locate additional posts that Google was not able to locate. In total, more than 230 posts were collected from, mostly, discussion forums.

Additionally, posts on *taharrush ginsy* were elicited from Twitter. Keyword searches have become relatively easy in Twitter, unlike with Facebook, and they generated a wealth of posts. An important note here is that hashtag searches were not run in Twitter because the keyword searches revealed that people tweeting about sexual harassment were using a wide range of hashtags, depending on where their tweets were directed. Examples include #masr, #Egypt, #arabspring, #saudi, #feminism, #halt3alim (did you know), in addition to #SexualHarassment, #EndSH and more, etc. A hashtag search, therefore, might have led to the extraction of tweets from threads promoting a particular perspective. Searches in Twitter were modified slightly to search for “*el-taharrush el-ginsy fi maṣr*” (sexual harassment in Egypt), to pull any discussions of sexual harassment in Egypt. Whether this modification was appropriate or not is still not fully clear. While it was important to collect tweets that were not only “preaching to the choir,” so to speak, it was imperative to find a way to better refine some of the information that was generated because Twitter contained so much data. In the long run, it turned out that there were several problems with Twitter that have challenged the viability of the data it generated for this portion of the research. The largest of these problems was that Twitter did not launch operations until 2008 – three years following the beginning of anti-sexual harassment activism in Egypt. When the Twitter data was compared to the discussion board/blog post data, it became apparent that key shifts in

discourse had already occurred well before 2008. Moreover, tweets are generally limited in the number of characters allowed. This meant that there were many tweets that were not very useful. Many were often re-tweets of news articles, with little commentary, or they were commentary that provided too little text, and/or the tweet was from an NGO or initiative advertising an event or activity that did not provide information on people's perspectives, sentiments or opinions. As with the discussion forums/blog sites, more than 270 tweets were collected for the years 2008 to 2012.

### **Positionality and Reflexivity**

My engagement with anti-sexual harassment activism in Egypt has been a long time in the making. The idea for this research project, in some ways, took root before such activism began in 2005. In that year, a little more than a year after the completion of my MA in archaeology, I took time off to explore options both for moving forward in academia and on what kinds of research would be interesting if I were to try and proceed in such a career field. I was facing a small personal crisis of relevancy when I finished my MA and, like many socially conscious young people, I was concerned with engaging in work that would help solve some of the very real problems in the world. By 2005, I was already long preoccupied with Egypt. I studied abroad at the American University in Cairo in the late 1990's, worked at the Giza-Saqqara-Bahariya Inspectorate Office under the direction of the then-Director General, Zahi Hawass, worked on a field excavation with the Giza Plateau Mapping Project under the direction of Dr. Mark Lehner, and had been married to an Egyptian for six years by the time I returned to Egypt in 2005. After graduate studies, I felt compelled to return to Egypt to live for some time in order to, both

to ensure that my five-year old son maintained exposure to Arabic, but to also figure out what I wanted to do with myself.

NGOs and women's rights activism were issues that I was developing a growing interest in since my marriage. On a short trip to visit family in Cairo in 2004, I sought out the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR), with vague notions of doing volunteer work to gain a sense of how civil society and women's advocacy NGOs operated in Egypt. ECWR was then located in a high rise on the other side of Roda Island from my home neighborhood of Manial al-Roda. I met with Nehad Aboul Qomsan, the Director of ECWR, who kindly – and without seeming to think twice, much to her credit – allowed this strange young girl to come into the organization and, essentially, putter around and help out wherever possible. My work with ECWR began the following year in 2005, under the direction of Rebecca Chiao, who was then the International Relations Officer and who had been working on implementing an internship program in ECWR. When I arrived in the summer, there were already 3-4 interns working for ECWR on a variety of issues, and sexual harassment was not yet a project that ECWR developed. Instead, I became involved in other programmatic areas, including research on female genital mutilation/circumcision (FGM/C), comparative research on Arab women's political participation, and I was also tasked with looking into the UN structure and how ECWR could go about seeking consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

It was the FGM/C project in particular that first fomented within me questions about NGO frames and messaging, the effectiveness of NGO work, and whether local attitudes around the practice were in any way shifting based on the awareness trainings that entities like ECWR organized. I sat through one memorable training session in

Shubra el-Khayma where the trainer, a medical doctor, went over largely medical information that covered female physiology, what female circumcision was, and what complications could arise from female circumcision. She also attempted some limited discussion about the lack of religious basis for the practice, but in general there was a great deal of visible boredom from the audience. I had doubts about how effective this training was. Moreover, at some points in the sessions, there seemed to be a small degree of contention between audience members and the doctor about when female circumcision might be necessary. Speaking with one of the ladies in the training session, I discovered that they worked for another community-based organization that operated in Shubra and as part of their professional development they attended trainings such as the one offered by ECWR. ECWR, incidentally, was also involved in helping such community-based organization to build capacity. It was clear to me that there was disagreement about what constituted a problem even within activist fields, and that perhaps the way in which NGOs constructed their messages was somehow not resonating with those they were seeking to sway.

FGM/C, in particular, has long been a highly problematic issue area in Egypt, very much linked to larger historic norms of marriageability and familial honor, and the focus of intensive interventions from international development agencies (Refaat et al. 2001). Sexual harassment, on the other hand, at this time was not even part of the discourse. Anecdotally, everyone understood that there was a problem of women being accosted in the streets, yet it was not considered serious enough to warrant activist attention (and was not yet named *taharrush ginsy*). As a student living in the AUC dorms in Zamalek between 1998-1999, I was subject to numerous personal experiences of being

stared at, catcalled, followed (both by men on foot and in cars), having one young man attempt to pull me in his car, being touched and grabbed, and more. At the time, I can't say with certainty that I actively thought of such acts as sexual harassment, and coming from a context where such street behaviors were not evident, there was admittedly some minimal amount of thrill to be the seeming object of attention. As a young college student- even until I started working for ECWR 6 years later - I did not think about the implications of such forms of public sexualized behavior and/or why it seemed so prevalent in the Egyptian context. However, some of the scarier incidents that I experienced taught me quickly to adjust my comportment in public. These incidents drilled within me a measure of anxiety that led me to behave in certain ways in public. For example, always wearing headphones and listening to music in the street to avoid hearing people, walking faster to my destination, and either staring at the ground or, if I was looking forward, to act as if no one was there, even if I was being harassed. This actually had the negative effect of also making me slightly less observant of those around me because I was working too hard to ignore them, which was the cause of other smaller problems. These sorts of behaviors were evident in Cairo's streets for a very long time before ECWR decided to informally (and then formally) try and do something about it.

In the fall of 2005, I became involved in the early stages of ECWR's work on sexual harassment. Initially, electronic surveys were distributed and collected to document people's experiences of sexual harassment. This first phase, which continued well after my departure from ECWR in mid-2006, was an attempt to empirically and in somewhat grounded fashion explore what people were saying about the phenomenon, to move beyond anecdote and to more systematically gain insight into what the problem

was. At the same time, the program began to organize information sessions on the university campuses to open a dialogue about sexual harassment. The first of these, which I was involved in obtaining permissions for and attending, occurred on AUC's Greek campus and a later session was held on the Main campus in Tahrir Square (this was before AUC moved to New Cairo). Additional sessions were held at Cairo University, which I was also involved in helping to organize but could not attend. ECWR members believed that the Cairo University sessions would be more contentious than those held at AUC. In fact, the initial permissions we sought from Cairo University were denied due to concerns about the nature of the topic, and ECWR did not want to have a foreign presence associated with the program in this particular setting.

I left Cairo in 2006 but remained in contact with Rebecca Chiao afterwards. Here and there, I continued to follow developments with the sexual harassment project. In subsequent years, activism on the issue continued to grow, though it seemed only a peripheral "problem" that received nominal attention from the NGO sector, at least until the Revolution. Following the Revolution, the nature of civil society engagement on sexual harassment changed in dramatic ways. In the design of this project, it seemed a particularly good moment to step back from the severe violence that was capturing global attention and to revisit the questions that had caused some consternation for me years earlier. Given my own anthropological training on development and NGOs, much of which has been highly critical and has seen development work as constructing and reproducing certain problematics in the world and NGOs as elite entities implicated in perpetuating neocolonial practices, I admit that I entered into my research with some degree of cynicism that the work of Egyptian civil society was too enmeshed in the



transnational to make any difference in the lives of local people. However, my fieldwork experiences helped to temper my cynicism and to see more of the middle ground within civil society activism. Despite the class implications of civil society work, the activists engaged in anti-sexual harassment activism have been tireless, hard-working and dedicated, many of whom physically put their lives on the line in Tahrir Square to save and assist victims of mob violence. These activists readily understand the problems facing civil society activism and seek ways to engage all sectors and all levels of their society on this problem, including government, corporate, rural, poor, middle class, wealthy, men and women alike. Coming out of this research, I am far more inspired by the possibilities around current activism, despite the situation of civil society between the transnational and the local. This ethnographic account attempts to balance critical reflections on civil society activism around sexual harassment, looking positively at approaches but also seeking to identify challenges in efforts toward social change.

### **Argument and Dissertation Organization**

This dissertation situates sexual harassment and anti-sexual harassment efforts within the larger system of gender, transnational women's rights, and social movement activism in Egypt. Drawing on cultural politics, international relations, social movement and feminist theories, this dissertation makes several inter-related claims.

First, I argue that the phenomenon of street sexual harassment in Egypt represents the reproduction of gendered bodies within a patriarchal system of gender built around heteronormative sexuality. In other words, I argue that sexual harassment is a process that maintains and reminds people about their "feminine" and "masculine" identities and

roles. Patriarchy informs the practice of sexual harassment, but sexual harassment also helps to reproduce the patriarchal gender system by gendering people's bodies and roles in ways that privilege the heteronormative pair in Egyptian society.

Second, I argue that grassroots anti-sexual harassment work that focuses its efforts at the community level takes place within a larger sphere of transnational activism focused on violence against women. In particular, anti-sexual harassment work promotes sexual harassment as a form of violence against women and attempts to disrupt the long held system of gender that discriminates against women. As is prevalent in transnational feminist activism, anti-sexual harassment discourses challenge victim blaming, normative masculinity, and actively promote sexual harassment as a crime, but in ways that only limited engage state and legal institutions, if at all.

Third, I argue that the work of community-based anti-sexual harassment initiatives focused primarily on combatting everyday sexual harassment, such as HarassMap, is a political process with political effects. Community-based anti-sexual harassment activists do not necessarily promote their work as political. However, this dissertation takes as its starting point the integrated nature of social and political realms, arguing that processes that involve the negotiation of cultural norms and structural realities are inherently political. I also contend that through a focus on the mobilization of bystanders and building critical mass, the work of entities like HarassMap does have intended, long-term effects for political culture. The political, therefore, has two specific meanings in this dissertation, both as a negotiative process involving the creation of new social norms and as a reference for political culture.

Finally, I argue that public perceptions of *taḥarrush ginsy* only partially align with anti-sexual harassment efforts to link sexual harassment with everyday forms of sexual harassment, such as catcalls, staring, following & stalking, etc. Public perceptions, instead, are informed by historic understandings of *taḥarrush* as a very violent form of assault and even rape, usually targeting children. Here, the public draws a distinct line between verbal and physical forms of sexual harassment, largely associating *taḥarrush* with the physical. The public does accept *taḥarrush* as a form of violence against women. However, they generally do not accept that *taḥarrush* includes everyday forms of sexual harassment. Moreover, among those members of the public that are more open to redefinitions of *taḥarrush*, they tend to portray and describe everyday forms of sexual harassment in violent terms that mirror descriptions of assault and rape.

With these arguments in mind, the following chapters deconstruct various facets of sexual harassment in Egypt, how it produced as a problem through the discursive and mobilizational techniques of Egyptian civil society, and how the public still differs in their estimation of *taḥarrush ginsy*.

This first chapter provides a framework for the ethnography presented in this dissertation. It opened by laying out several key events in the history of sexual harassment in Egypt that arose in personal discussions and interviews with activists, in workshops, in the news, and even in reports and academic pieces. The “truth” underlying these events with regard to how people characterize sexual harassment is not necessarily the concern of this project, i.e. it is not the purpose of this project to convince anyone that a problem truly exists. Instead, it is the telling of these events of sexual harassment, the way in which they live in the imaginations of activist and non-activist Egyptians, that is

of primary concern. More specifically, this ethnography focuses on how this narrative of sexual harassment has been constructed in particular ways and how activism both facilitates and is impacted by unfolding aspects of this narrative. In other words, the goal of this project is to explore how sexual harassment as a problem is produced through activist discourses and mobilizational strategies, and how their own narratives challenge these activists. Chapter 1 highlights a number of ambiguities in this discourse, around the social and political nature of sexual harassment and, therefore, anti-sexual harassment activism. In addition, the tensions and interplay between transnational and local influences on sexual harassment discourses, along with the lack of terminological clarity, are similarly detailed. These ambiguities and tensions underpin the research questions that are outlined in this chapter, along with the methodological approaches undertaken to shed light on these issues. Ensuing chapters examine each one of these aspects.

Chapter 2 argues that sexual harassment in Egypt is an expression of a hetero-normative gender system in operation in the country and serves to remind both men and women of their place within this system. This argument unfolds through an analysis of the history and critique of sexual harassment and anti-sexual harassment activism, followed by an examination of gender norms and legal structures in Egypt. Chapter 2 begins with a literature review that offers a dual perspective on sexual harassment. It intertwines history and critique by highlighting key events that define sexual harassment and sexual harassment activism in the country. The chapter then explores academic arguments around these events. Here, both the everyday forms of sexual harassment and the politically commissioned violence are woven together in a single narrative that underscores the complexity of public sexual harassment and sexual violence in Egypt.

Exploring these forms of violence together makes possible the ability to also examine critical debates around the potentially depoliticizing tendencies of anti-sexual harassment activism that are important in later chapters. The chapter further looks at the rise of the independent initiatives, which are at the forefront of activism on the issue and highlights the pre-eminent initiative, HarassMap, which has been instrumental in shaping the larger movement against sexual harassment.

The discussion in Chapter 2 moves into salient aspects of historic gender norms within which the phenomenon of sexual harassment is situated and that the initiatives seek to combat, focusing on sentiments of honor and shame vis-a-vis women's bodies. In particular, Chapter 2 underscores important notions about the danger of female sexuality and the need to control women's bodies and, therefore, lineage, which was historically the role of families. Here, female sexuality has two facets: it both incites male desire but is also largely passive in nature, meaning that women are made responsible for unleashing male sexuality but are themselves denied the ability to feel sexual desire. Women in public are viewed as pushing the boundaries of acceptable codes of modesty, but they exist in a liminal state, where the family does not have the same level of control over their bodies. Their public presence is the potential cause of chaos and, as such, the control over their bodies is expanded beyond the family to the community at large. This control, though, occurs in a system where sexuality itself can only be appropriately expressed through marriage, which affords both men and women sexual release and children. Marriage systems privilege the male-female binary, which, in the current state of economic decline is challenged in Egypt. Since men and women are unable to marry early, male sexual release is expressed through sexually harassing behaviors directed at

women that reaffirm the binary structure. Lastly, the chapter briefly touches on the legal framework around gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the country, which is embedded in this system of honor and shame.

Chapter 3 sets the framework for an argument that further unfolds in Chapter 5, which is that anti-sexual harassment work that takes place at the level of community or the street is a political process with political effects. Here, relevant background and theory on the larger context within which anti-sexual harassment activism unfolds is canvassed. This chapter begins by exploring transnational women's rights activism and the role of Egyptian women's advocacy NGOs in this activism. How violence against women arose as an organizing frame arose is a further theme. In particular, the UN World Conferences of the 1990s, both the Human Rights Conference in Vienna and the Conference on Women in Beijing, were critical forums through which the focus on gender violence emerged. The engagement of Egyptian NGOs was fomented through these conferences, as well as the Conference on Population Development in Cairo, where they played a key role. NGOs are recognized as key mediators of international rights-based discourses, and that mediation involves constructing and discursively framing new norms in particular ways. New norms that engage with already existing normative structures are viewed as "resonant" and having more success in taking hold with people. Though scholars have argued that resonance reproduces problematic norms that mediators seek to eliminate, thereby making radical frames a better approach, Chapter 3 argues that civil society activists promote some mix of resonant and radical frames.

Yet, despite their role as norm mediators, NGOs in Egypt operate within a repressive, corporatist environment. Chapter 3 highlights how state control of all

associations in Egypt was manifest through Law 32 of 1964, which gave the government broad powers to dissolve NGOs, to sit on their boards of directors, and control their funding sources. As noted in Chapter 2 with respect to criticisms of ECWR's approach, NGOs have only limited ability to challenge corrupt state practices, including their use of sexual violence at protests and detention settings. Political advocacy, in which women's rights NGOs have long engaged, is possible only to a point and certainly not viable if it threatens state legitimacy. However, political advocacy is the preferred method of operation for many human and women's rights entities, in part because many activists view structural change as possible only through the development of new institutional (political and legal) arrangements. Egyptian civil society entities generally engage in top-down processes of change, which necessitates political and legal reformulations first. In turn, political and legal change makes possible wider social change within the population. Entities, like HarassMap, argue the reverse. They contend that political change cannot precede changes in social perceptions and behaviors, because the government is already corrupt, patriarchal and has no incentive to change. Therefore, they focus their efforts on building a critical mass of bystander publics that will adopt new norms of social responsibility and will later demand the change they want from the government.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 answer the three specific research questions guiding this project. Chapter 4 addresses the first research question of this project, regarding how anti-sexual harassment initiatives talk about sexual harassment. This chapter delves into the discursive processes of the anti-sexual harassment initiatives. It draws on theory outlined in Chapter 3 regarding resonance and radicalization to better understand how anti-sexual harassment discourses engage with and challenge long held gendered norms

in Egypt. Chapter 4 identifies seven primary themes in anti-sexual harassment discourses, the norms that are evident in these themes, and how those norms are framed by anti-sexual harassment initiatives. These themes disrupt victim-blaming that makes women responsible for their sexual harassment, reorient blame for sexual harassment on men and male privilege, undercut common stereotypes that center on peripheral reasons for why sexual harassment occurs, advocate for the need to create safe spaces that protect women in public places, promote sexual harassment as a crime, and implore people to not stand on the sidelines and to speak up and intervene when they witness sexual harassment. This chapter also explores three specific framing techniques through which anti-sexual harassment initiatives seek to sway public opinion. They include associating new norms with long held norms that are more resonant in local society. Despite academic theorizing that resonant norms may only reproduce problematic practices, these associations bring together disparate social values. For instance, anti-sexual harassment activists argue that the public regularly intervenes in cases of theft, where whole neighborhoods will join together to apprehend a pickpocket or get a thief to the police, yet they fail to do so with harassers. Initiatives, therefore, seek to associate theft of property with violations of bodily integrity, thus inciting people to speak up. In addition, other techniques involve turning long held beliefs into myths and seek to build a rational discursive evidence base through which to prove the existence of sexual harassment.

Chapter 5 explores the second research question in this project, regarding the mobilizational strategies employed by anti-sexual harassment initiatives to encourage people to speak up against the problem. It argues that the community-based activism of anti-sexual harassment activists, which include refashioning the nature of social



perceptions and behaviors of bystanders, is a political process. Engaging with theory on the cultural politics of social movements, this chapter highlights a disjuncture between the social and political in much of the theory that addresses social movements. Political culture is often not viewed as the result of a complex set of cultural negotiations, and cultural negotiations are often not seen as political in orientation. Even academic analyses on Egyptian civil society, NGOs and social movements tend to focus on top-down, state-centered vision of change. Only recently has the street as a site of sociopolitical negotiation been promoted. Asef Bayat (1998 & 2009) demonstrates how poor people's movements in Iran and other parts of the Middle East have the ability to mobilize large swaths of individuals through a process he calls "quiet encroachment." In his analysis, he describes how poor Iranians were able to attain the services denied them by the state through a variety of informal acts, from squatting to tapping illegally into municipal water sources, as well as through organized protest.

Turning toward the community-based activities of HarassMap, Chapter 5 identifies three mobilization tactics undertaken to target bystanders and build a society of responsible citizens that look out for neighbors and will later demand political change. These tactics include organizing monthly street campaigns and various training workshops in order to build volunteer community teams all over Egypt. These volunteer teams of concerned individuals carry out the work of convincing neighbors to speak up against sexual harassment. Additionally, creating safe areas, schools and universities has emerged as a major focus of anti-sexual harassment initiatives. Local businesses in a neighborhood are encouraged to become role models for other businesses in the area, developing policies designed to keep everyone safe in the business's local area. This is

similarly the case with schools and universities, where volunteer teams are built and trained to advocate for perception changes and school policies. Lastly, technology is also a mobilization tool that assumes great importance in anti-sexual harassment work. The new norms and frames discussed in Chapter 4 are usually deployed via online spaces, such as social media sites. However, through open-source crowd-mapping platforms, the public itself is engaged to create new narratives of sexual harassment.

Chapter 6 engages with the final question of this research project, regarding how members of the public speak about sexual harassment. It interrogates public perceptions of *taḥarrush ginsy*, past and present, in order to assess how they may or may not align with discourses promoted by anti-sexual harassment initiatives. There were two primary approaches to assessing public perceptions: a social media analysis and survey analysis. The chapter begins with a longitudinal assessment of public perceptions, analyzing posts from online Arabic discussion forums and blog sites over a twelve-year time span, from 2000-2012. This timeframe was chosen because it both predated the first anti-sexual harassment campaign implemented by ECWR and it goes as far back as the Arabic Internet allows on discussions of *taḥarrush*. Posts pre-dating 2000 were not available through the search method employed. Posts were collected from across the region, which allowed for a comparative analysis of discursive trends in Egypt vis-à-vis their neighbors. Findings in this analysis highlight that conversations on *taḥarrush* across the twelve-year time span demonstrate two trends. Prior to 2006, posts from across the region show a primary focus sexual violence in the private sphere, centering on the molestation and rape of children with some attention to the sexual harassment of women in private space, usually within the context of incest and family violence. After 2006, online posts from

Egypt dramatically shift and increase in volume, revealing a primary focus on the sexual harassment of women in public space. In this year, there is a noticeable shift in discussions of *taḥarrush* in Egypt that is linked to the 2006 Eid mob harassment. From this time, Egyptian posts center almost exclusively on women in the public space, while conversations region-wide demonstrate the continuation of a dual focus on children and then women.

I assess current public perceptions of *taḥarrush* through analysis of survey findings that underscore several key tensions between civil society discourses and public perceptions. On the one hand, there is widespread belief within the public that *taḥarrush* is a very problematic issue in Egypt, though many view this as recent and the result of the Revolution. Eleven themes emerged in the way people initially defined *taḥarrush*. People appeared to equally include the physical and verbal in their personal conceptions of sexual harassment. There were a range of behaviors people included, such as rape/assault, stalking/following, annoying/bullying, gazing, getting too close, and generic movements. People also saw *taḥarrush* as immoral/abnormal, a violation of rights, and associated with male lust and sexual repression. These themes varied across gender, class and age groups. Interestingly, when asked about the concept of *mu'ākṣa* (flirting), very few people saw *mu'ākṣa* as a form of *taḥarrush*. When defining *taḥarrush* vis-à-vis *mu'ākṣa*, new distinctions appeared that made visible how people see *taḥarrush* as largely connected to the physical, whereas *mu'ākṣa* is seen as overwhelmingly verbal. Yet, there was a great deal of terminological confusion in that violent verbal harassment, i.e. words and comments that were filthy and provided a sense of the body being invaded, could also be viewed as *taḥarrush*. Moreover, discussions of *mu'ākṣa* demonstrate far more

variability than description of *taḥarrush*, including associations with assault. This indicates that anti-sexual harassment efforts focused on reframing *taḥarrush* similarly require new formulations around the sister concept of *mu'āksa*.

Chapter 7 reflects on the arguments made in this dissertation. More importantly, it considers the future of anti-sexual harassment activism. Based on findings in this dissertation, Chapter 7 considers three avenues for continued success of community-based anti-sexual harassment activism. Moreover, it reflects on the current political situation in the post-Revolutionary period, which has grown increasingly repressive with the re-establishment of military rule.

## CHAPTER 2: THE POLITICS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN EGYPT

Public, or street, sexual harassment in Egypt has received increasing attention from scholars since the January 2011 revolution. Post-2011 analyses primarily demonstrate two different threads in the conversation on sexual violence and social activism to combat sexual harassment in the country. The first thread has begun to examine sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence that are politically commissioned and/or that occurs largely in protest settings. Driven predominantly by those with specific interests in feminist politics and security studies, this thread in the discussion on sexual harassment in Egypt has been concerned with several issues. These include the nature of feminist political challenges to state sanctioned violence, the motivations and role of men in anti-sexual harassment activism, the way in which sexual harassment discourses have been co-opted by the state in the securitization of the country, the exclusion of women from political participation through attacks on female respectability in public, and the role of civil society entities in reproducing neocolonial notions of unruly Arab men (Ahmed-Zaky & Abdelhameed 2014; Amar 2011; Langohr 2013 & 2014; Tadros 2013 & 2014). Part of this discussion has also included concerns about the depoliticization of sexual harassment discourses from both civil society entities and the public itself, an issue to be further examined later in this chapter.

The second thread in the academic conversation on street sexual harassment in Egypt comes from those with an interest in social movements and digital activism. Here, this discussion follows on the heels of the larger debate that occurred on the role of technology in fomenting the revolutions that recently swept across North Africa and the Middle East (Aouragh & Alexander 2011; Khamis & Vaughn 2013; Lim 2012; Lynch

2011; Tufexci & Wilson 2012). This thread explores how NGOs and some of the new independent initiatives that arose in the post-2011 political vacuum employed technology to combat gendered (patriarchal) norms. The social initiative, HarassMap, features large in some of these studies because of a unique approach they employ, the Ushahidi crowd-mapping platform, a system that combines GIS mapping and SMS technology, to encourage members of the public to report sexual harassment. HarassMap then makes these reports publicly, though anonymously, available online (ElSayed 2013; Rabie 2013; Skalli 2014; Young 2014). These studies look at how technology is used to mobilize and incite social and political change. Youth activism is a critical component of this thread in the literature, as well as how a new breed of youth activists is eschewing feminist approaches in favor of activism underpinned by a human rights-based ethic that is seen as more gender inclusive.

An examination of the sexual politics of sexual harassment itself and its relation to the wider system of gendered norms in Egypt is missing from these analyses. Sexual harassment has not yet been scrutinized through the lens of patriarchal structures of honor and shame that help to govern women's bodies. Honor and shame, underpinned by notions of respectability, modesty and the danger inherent in female bodies and sexuality, represent another critical facet in how sexually violent practices must be understood. While the gendered nature of violence, as well as its link to patriarchal control, is widely appreciated, the focus on political violence has somewhat blurred how sexual violence, including sexual harassment, is a widespread act of gendering that occurs within society as a whole, and that this gendering takes place within a system that privileges a certain male-female dynamic. Everyday sexual harassment, in addition to state-sponsored sexual

harassment in Egypt, is one means that maintains the gendered status quo and reproduces heteronormative gender relations. It is the heterosexual unit and how men and women alone struggle over sexuality that continues to be naturalized through acts of sexual harassment. The persistence of sexual harassment is made possible by inherent notions of honor and shame that are encoded in legal practice and that have gone unchallenged in a more systemic and expansive way that includes political, social and economic activism.

In this chapter, I discuss the history of anti-sexual harassment activism along with the theoretical debates that surround this activism and how sexual harassment is/has been understood in Egypt. This chapter further examines of a number of social initiatives seeking to combat sexual harassment, with a particular emphasis on HarassMap, whose strategic approach toward combatting gendered norms and refashioning the nature of social behavior with respect to sexual harassment is important given its theoretical grounding. Additionally, I show how sexual harassment exists within the system of gendered norms in Egypt, which are also underpinned by Islamic precepts that evolved from earlier tribal and pre-Islamic practices. Concomitantly, I investigate the complex of honor and shame, along with how gender violence and sexual harassment serve to reproduce a particular dynamic of sexuality, predicated on heterosexual normativity. Finally, this chapter concludes by highlighting how norms of gender and sexuality are encoded in gender violence legislation in Egypt.

### **The Problem of Sexual Harassment in Egypt: History, Theories and Debates**

In late 2005, the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR), a woman's rights advocacy NGO, began an informal program aimed at combatting the problem of sexual

harassment, or what they termed *taharrush ginsy*, in the streets. Until that year, ECWR's work largely centered on increasing the political participation of women in government, at local and national levels. Toward this end, ECWR ran numerous training workshops to teach female candidates techniques for running campaigns. Additionally, ECWR's work extended into research and report writing on women's political participation in Egypt and the Middle East. Other programming areas included assisting women with access to basic services, female genital mutilation/circumcision (FGM/C), and legal advocacy, which many other women's rights entities also attended to, including high profile NGOs such as the Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women (ADEW) and Al-Mar'a Al-Gedida, or the New Women's Research Center (Al-Ali 2000; El-Kholy 2002). In general, much of the early sexual violence programming that took place in Egypt focused more specifically on FGM/C, or female genital mutilation/circumcision, which was linked to reproductive health issues that became salient and received the bulk of funding beginning in the mid-1990's (al-Ali 2000; Seif el-Dawla 2000). Domestic violence, frequently referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV) in Egypt, and torture also emerged as issues in the 1990's and early 2000's, which fell within the purview of El-Nadeem Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture. El-Nadeem, founded in 1993, has long documented the use of sexual abuse and rape against both men and women in prison (Abdel Aziz 2007). Sexual harassment, however, was not yet a widely recognized problem even when ECWR began its informal work.

In early 2005, prior to the formation of ECWR's anti-sexual harassment program, female activists protesting outside of the Press Syndicate offices in downtown Cairo were sexually harassed and assaulted by police forces and state hired "*baltigiyya*," or thugs



(Al-Nabaa News 2005; Langohr 2013; Radwan 2011). As Chapter 1 noted, this incident became iconic, *a posteriori*, in marking the acknowledged beginnings of the problem of sexual harassment in the country. Following the event, reactions were swift from prominent activists, scholars, and civil society organizations in forming a short-lived movement against political violence, The Street is Ours (*al-shāra' linā*), and condemning state efforts to silence dissent, and more specifically for doing so through assaults designed to curtail women's participation in the public sphere (Adly 2013; Nazra Joint Statement 2012). At the time, however, there was no clear definition or conceptualization, both within civil society and the public-at-large, of what sexual harassment, as *taḥarrush ginsy*, was. An article released on the incident in June 2005 by Al-Nabaa News referenced the Black Wednesday attack as both *taḥarrush* and *htk' irḍ*, a term often translated as “indecent assault” (Al-Nabaa News 2005). As will be discussed later in this chapter, *htk' irḍ* is deeply inhered with cultural connotations of honor and shame and is employed in the Egyptian penal code, Article 267, to signify rape. Around the Black Wednesday incident, both *taḥarrush* and *htk' irḍ* were utilized interchangeably in the article to reference the attacks on female protestors, which also likened the indecent assault on women as an assault on the nation. Arabic news agencies similarly aligned *taḥarrush* with *ightaṣab*, also a term for rape but with connotations of usurpation and violation that are not grounded in notions of honor, in the Attaba Girl case more than a decade earlier (Ball 2012). Yet, any connections between political and everyday public practices of sexual violence were not part of the discourse on gender, sexuality and violence in Egypt. As an everyday occurrence, sexual harassment was not a visible problem until ECWR began its campaign at the end of 2005.

ECWR's anti-sexual harassment campaign started informally as a fact-finding and awareness-raising mission that was largely implemented by a new corps of interns and volunteers. It primarily focused on everyday public sexual harassment and was not immediately concerned with politically motivated or commissioned sexual violence. The International Relations Director at the time, Rebecca Chiao, served as the primary lead on the project, which had no program manager, staff or funding until later in 2007 when it received a UN Population Fund (UNFPA) grant to undertake a scientific research project to better understand the scale of the problem of sexual harassment. Chiao also founded and was in charge of a new internship program through ECWR that allowed students and interested individuals an opportunity to participate in civil society work. In the initial stages of the ECWR project, these interns and volunteers distributed and collected paper surveys and organized university campus information booths to begin a dialogue with the public about the issue of sexual harassment. Efforts became more formalized in 2007, when UNFPA funding allowed ECWR to hire a program manager and a research team. Rizzo's (2008 and 2012) analyses of ECWR's anti-sexual harassment campaign noted a number of pertinent issues with respect to the approaches, both philosophical and mobilizational, that they undertook to combat the problem.

Rizzo argued that ECWR was oriented toward facilitating cultural change. She noted that scholars frequently focus on the political or governmental targets of social movement work, yet highlighted how non-institutional targets are often left unexamined. With reference to the women's and gay and lesbian movements, she stated, "While they did target the government for policy change, this was not their main concern; they were at least as interested in raising consciousness of the issue and achieving social change"

(Rizzo 2008, citing Van Dyke 2005). Here, she contended that ECWR's work was similarly directed toward changing social perspectives and behaviors on the issue of sexual harassment. In an interview with ECWR's director, Nehad Aboul Qomsan, she also asserted ECWR's position that sexual harassment was a largely social problem, which was similarly indicated in their conference report on sexual harassment in the Arab region (Interview 2014; ECWR 2009). The report acknowledged sexual harassment to be a multi-dimensional phenomenon, but it argued that the most salient of these dimensions were its social and psychological aspects.

Given this position, Rizzo additionally argued that ECWR was forced into a balancing act. On the one hand, ECWR felt compelled to maintain its legitimacy with the public by preserving its independence from state interference. Yet, in Egypt's politically repressive environment, ECWR was also pressured to assure its endeavors were non-threatening to the political order. Scholars of NGOs have long noted how they require sympathetic space offered by states in order to operate, and that states remain the ultimate arbiter of permissible civil society activity within their borders, regardless of considerable theorizing about the "death" of the state within the context of increasing transnationalism, economic restructuring in the developing world that has compromised state welfare practices and subsidies, and the growing assumption of state functions by NGOs (Fisher 1997; Mercer 1999; Murdock 2003; Raustiala 1997). Rizzo offers a cogent point that the political context within which ECWR operated was critical for understanding the decisions it made regarding anti-sexual harassment efforts. She maintains that ECWR sought to balance its' risk by focusing on cultural rather than political targets.

Yet, despite its “culturally” focused work on sexual harassment, ECWR as an advocacy NGO did not shy away from making limited demands and placing the responsibility for women’s security in public on the state. In their now famous 2008 report, *Clouds in Egypt’s Sky*, which gained more notoriety for being the first study to provide evidence of how many women suffered sexual harassment in Egypt, ECWR partially framed sexual harassment as one of lax security and legal enforcement in the country (Hassan et al. 2008). Within the report, ECWR urged the state to design a new law that would “define and criminalize” sexual harassment and to set new regulations for police and legal procedures. Essentially, ECWR called on the state to increase efforts toward managing the problem of sexual harassment, even as it focused its work at the community level. A number of scholars have noted tensions in this early anti-sexual harassment work in Egypt, identifying certain organizations as complicit in advocating for expanding repressive state measures and others as more adept at challenging the gendered politics of the state and the image of Egyptian women as the “hypervisible ...subjects of piety, self-policing, moralization and cultural security’ (Amar 2011: 309).

Amar argued that organizations such as ECWR were implicated in promoting “the quasi-racialization and parahumanization of working-class, male youth in urban Egypt” or vilifying Egyptian men as unruly and as hypervisible mobs in need of policing (2011: 315). By calling on the state to police such men, these NGOs were obfuscating how the state itself was involved in gendering respectability politics. Amar argued that the Egyptian state attempted to drive women from public participation by undercutting their respectability within a patriarchal structure that defined this respectability in particular ways. Entities such as El-Nadeem, he argued, countered this gendered state practice by

exposing and denouncing the state's use of such sexually violent tactics, both against women and men. Moreover, he asserted, such organizations, that also mobilized gender and class specific protests, were subverting long held notions of female respectability – that women could be visible, recognizable and respectable while participating in public life (and protest, more specifically). El-Nadeem and other such entities de-linked sexual harassment from the problem of masculinity in Egypt, and reframed it as “the particular perversion practiced by the repressive security state” (Amar 2011: 313).

Abu Lughod (2010 & 2013) proffered a similar argument by raising concerns that ECWR's campaign, in effect, depoliticized the problem of sexual harassment. As part of her exploration of the circulation of women's rights discourses in Egypt, Abu Lughod cited ECWR's campaign as an example of the commercialization of rights. She maintained that the commercialization of rights was occurring within a larger system of transnational activism that has, perhaps, fetishized violence against women and has created a new class of individuals profiting off of local problems (and potentially local suffering). This was in large part due to ECWR receiving corporate sponsorship for new technological approaches to combatting sexual harassment, and for entering a new SMS reporting platform in a USAID backed Net-squared competition in 2008. Moreover, she connected ECWR's campaign, subsequently named “Making Our Streets Safe for Everyone” (and later just called “Safe Streets”), to the earlier short-lived campaign “The Street is Ours,” arguing that ECWR appropriated the name but not the political approach of its predecessor. ECWR's approach differed because it focused solely on anonymous men and not the state (2010: 14). In so doing, ECWR failed to address the structural system within which gender violence in Egypt existed, which was facilitated by an

uncaring, harassing state. Like Amar, Abu Lughod's critique of anti-sexual harassment discourses heightened concerns that the activism of entities like ECWR was reinforcing neocolonial images of bad Arab men and not looking at the larger problem of sexual violence, in which the state was insidiously implicated.

While Abu Lughod acknowledged the everyday sexual harassment of women in Cairo's streets, the above critique elides a number of issues. The first is that public sexual harassment was a phenomenon that Egyptian women overwhelmingly began to speak up against as anti-sexual harassment efforts grew. Despite later academic fears of creating bad Arab men, ECWR activists believed they were meeting a social need presented to them by constituents that something had to be done about the way in which women's daily activities were hindered by harassing men who, perhaps, did not understand the impact sexual harassment had on women. ECWR focused on a range of sexually harassing behaviors prevalent in the streets, such as stares, comments, catcalling, and, in many cases, improper touching, particularly on transportation. They did not target but did not exclude politically commissioned sexual harassment in their work. ECWR's goal, as conveyed by Aboul Qomsan, was to criminalize these behaviors and to re-orient social perceptions that they were, somehow, non-threatening, non-problematic, and the normal actions of libidinous men unable to marry in a sexually repressive society. ECWR also sought to eliminate victim-blaming beliefs that women were responsible for the sexual harassment they experienced.

However, Peoples noted that a problem with ECWR's attempt to criminalize sexual harassment was the lack of distinction between street sexual harassment and sexual harassment, in which sexual harassment that does not occur in public space may

be punishable as “sodomy” (2008: 5-6). She questioned that street harassment, which included physical touching but was largely non-physical in nature could be prosecuted as sodomy. Moreover, People’s advanced an argument that anti-sexual harassment initiatives later challenged. According to Peoples, there was a crisis of masculinity in Egypt resulting from declining economic conditions and the inability for men to perform culturally prescribed “masculine” roles by marrying, having children and carrying the responsibility of maintaining a home. Accordingly, Peoples identified development policies in the period of structural adjustment that have worsened Egypt’s economic situation as disrupting traditional family structures, or patriarchal connectivity. Both she and Ilahi (2008a) highlighted how public sexual harassment allowed men to perform their masculinity in new ways for each other. ECWR members who later founded a new social initiative, HarassMap, eschewed such arguments centered on the crisis of masculinity as excuses justifying male behavior.

Additionally, the arguments offered by Amar and Abu Lughod overlook other facets of state-civil society relations and civil society activism in Egypt that informed ECWR’s anti-sexual harassment campaign. Chief among these is how NGOs are largely silenced, restrained or co-opted by the state in Egypt’s corporatist political environment (Bianchi 1989). Abdelrahman noted that within this environment, advocacy NGOs are the most active in challenging corporatist structures, however, “...their ability to achieve any meaningful political and social change remains very limited and their *ad hoc* interventions are insubstantial” (2004: 138). Referring back to Rizzo’s argument, NGOs walk a tight line in the degree to which they are able to challenge state practices, particular if those challenges undermine state legitimacy. Moreover, intra-civil society

bickering and mistrust, or the lack of civility within Egypt's civil society, also played a role in the drive to work at community levels (Al-Sayyid 1995). ECWR activists that were invested in anti-sexual harassment efforts were dismayed and concerned about what they viewed as corruption and the lack of transparency in NGO practice, as well as the ineffectiveness of advocacy methods within a political structure that only disenfranchised NGOs. Because of this, there was a push within ECWR to maintain a "cultural" rather than a political approach to sway the "hearts and minds" of the people, though after 2008 this approach took a drastic change.

ECWR's initial mobilizational approach was unique in that work was located at the community and street levels, raising awareness through the use of art, music, and other means at cultural centers, universities and other public venues (Rizzo 2012). Moreover, ECWR actively engaged news and social media in its campaign, with Aboul Qomsan appearing on talk shows and radio call-in shows, creating public service announcements, and working with online entities, such as Masrawy, that maintained a special section on their website devoted to anti-sexual harassment efforts (Rizzo 2012: 469). These activities occurred in conjunction with ECWR's advocacy-based methods of conducting research, lobbying and advocating for new laws and better enforcement. In 2008, ECWR's study, *Clouds in Egypt's Sky*, was released and gained widespread global attention for documenting, for the first time, that sexual harassment in Cairo's streets was a wide scale problem, with 86 percent of Egyptian women and 93 percent of foreign women surveyed indicating that they had experienced public sexual harassment (Hassan et al. 2008). Yet, as ECWR gained increasing amounts of attention, and as the sexual harassment program became more formalized within the organization, with funding and



new staff, ECWR's strategic approach to the issue began to change. According to Rebecca Chiao, community-based approaches waned as ECWR returned solely to the advocacy-based methods it was used to (Interview 2014). After 2008, its' anti-sexual harassment efforts stalled, though, in this year, ECWR issued a press release regarding the first successful court case against sexual harassment. The case of Noha Rushdie was prosecuted under Article 306 of the penal code, centered on "*khadsh hayā*," or the offense of modesty (Muslimah Media Watch 2008). ECWR called for continued dialogue and argued that the case set a legal precedent around the criminality of sexual harassment. However, staff that had been critical in driving ECWR's anti-sexual harassment efforts, including Rebecca Chiao and Engy Ghozlan, moved on to other endeavors, thus impacting ECWR's pre-eminence in this work.

In 2008, not long after leaving ECWR, Rebecca Chiao was approached by NiJel, an organization that was known for assisting other NGOs with implementing technological strategies for solving various local problems. A NiJel employee, who was living in Cairo and whose wife experienced frequent sexual harassment in the street, proposed a unique online crowd-mapping platform through Ushahidi, an organization that had developed GIS and SMS technology to map environmental and political crises. This open source, mapping program, which would allow any member of the public to contribute to data generation, symbolized a turn in international development practices, which increasingly centered on technology, the data revolution, and citizen participation as solutions to the problems of globalization and the failures of large-scale development projects (Castells 1996; Escobar 1995; Schmidt & Cohen 2013). Chiao, who moved on to Ashoka Egypt (and later Injaz), and Ghazlan, who took a position with GIZ, had both

moved on from anti-sexual harassment activism, but they sent NiJel's idea to ECWR for potential development and implementation. The platform was entered into the Netsquared competition, where it ultimately lost. ECWR, whose advocacy strategies did not include digital activism, did not take the project further, leaving Chiao and Ghozlan wondering if they should develop the platform in their spare time. Through the end of 2009 and most of 2010, Chiao and Ghozlan, along with former ECWR colleague, Sawsan Gad, and UNFPA partner, Amel Fahmy, who was involved in funding ECWR's Safe Streets program, worked with NiJel to develop the crowd-mapping system and to explore options for registering a new entity, which they called HarassMap.

These four co-founders of HarassMap felt it important to continue where ECWR left off with its community based work. However, in an interview, Chiao noted that the technological aspect of their work was a "bonus" to offline work in neighborhoods to change societal attitudes around sexual harassment (February 2013). Initially, Ushahidi was seen as providing a means to target neighborhoods for community outreach, as the mapping system would begin to highlight "hotspots" of sexual harassment. Political and legal advocacy on gender and sexual violence, including sexual harassment, was already occurring with a number of NGOs, including ECWR. In 2008, 16 NGOs formed the Taskforce for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence, coordinated by the New Women Foundation, whose mission was, in part, advocating for and drafting amendments to penal code articles centered on gender-based violence (FIDH 2014). What did not exist was a concomitant community-level initiative focused on changing social perceptions, which the HarassMap co-founders felt to be of vital importance.

Underpinning HarassMap's community approach, in part, was concern that changing political and legal structures without also changing societal norms would be insufficient to end public sexual harassment. Notwithstanding the Rushdie case, enforcement of the law on sexual harassment cases was, and still is, highly problematic. ECWR's 2008 study indicated that 97 percent of Egyptian and 87 percent of foreign women surveyed did not report sexual harassment to the police (Hassan et al. 2008). This finding was later reconfirmed by the 2014 HarassMap study that showed only 2 percent of their study sample reported sexual harassment to the police (Fahmy et al. 2014). ECWR's study further indicated that police tended to mock women filing reports, that women did not believe the police would help them, and that foreign women identified police officers as harassers. According to Chiao, effective enforcement of the law depends on the police believing something wrong has been done. Here she claimed that belief in the wrongness of certain actions stem from social roots and that police officers themselves are no different from other members of their society who do not always know or believe in the law (Interview 2012).

In October 2010, just three months prior to the January 2011 Egyptian Revolution, HarassMap informally launched its online crowd-mapping platform. The immediate responses crashed the fledgling website, and hundreds of individuals sent in emails indicating interest in participating in anti-sexual harassment work. Persistent problems with the technology, as well as the continuously growing response from the public, stimulated a revision in practice where the idea of "hotspots" became obsolete. Instead, HarassMap chose to deploy volunteers in their home neighborhoods to begin the work of convincing neighbors, community members and friends to speak up against and

not accept the practice of sexual harassment in the streets. Another part of the philosophical underpinnings of HarassMap's community approach was that, regardless of the numerous excuses that were given for why public sexual harassment occurred, the ultimate reason for the existence of the practice was that people allowed it to continue. Either people did not speak up against the practice when witnessing it, for a variety of reasons, or victims themselves were too afraid and ashamed to voice their experiences or were deliberately silenced. HarassMap attributed public inaction and apathy in speaking up against sexual harassment to decreasing levels of social responsibility in Egyptian society and that people, particularly since the Revolution but even prior to it, increasingly did not care about each other. Victim-blaming excuses that laid the responsibility for sexual harassment on those who suffered it, primarily women, were viewed by HarassMap as forms of violence aimed at maintaining the heteronormative gender order. Community outreach, therefore, as it evolved since 2010, was designed to have volunteers convince those they knew, whether directly or indirectly through community ties, to change their perspectives on sexual harassment and to see it (with all of facets) as a crime, to intervene, and to question gender stereotypes and that which constitutes "normal" gendered behavior.

On January 25, 2011, tens of thousands turned out in Tahrir Square to protest the brutal police state of Hosny Mubarak and his National Democratic Party, including large numbers of women (Khalil 2011; Rashed 2011; Zuhur 2014). In the first 18 days of protest, activists initially noted the absence of sexual harassment, with many referring to Tahrir as a "harassment free zone" (Langohr 2013). However, on February 11, 2011, the day Hosny Mubarak stepped down, CBS correspondent, Lara Logan, was surrounded by

a swarm of 200 male protestors, separated from her crew, and raped (Replogle 2011). Logan's case was the first in what would become a regular practice of mob, or collective, sexual assaults over the period of 2011-2013. A number of high profile incidents became iconic of the sexual violence targeting women in the square, including the "Blue Bra Girl" (*sett el-banāt*) incident and the case of Samira Ibrahim (Hafez 2014; Seikaly 2013). The "blue bra girl" was an unknown female protestor who was captured on video being dragged through Tahrir by state security forces until her black robe (*'abāyah*) was pulled up to reveal her blue bra, after which her body was stomped by one of the soldiers dragging her. Samira Ibrahim gained widespread notoriety for taking the government to court after she was arrested in Tahrir, along with 17 others, during the March 8 Women's Day march, tied to International Women's Day, and subjected to a virginity test (*kashef el-'adhariyya*). The practice of virginity testing was supported by then General el-Sisi as a necessity to protect the military from allegations of rape (Daily News Egypt 2011). Yet, underpinning the virginity tests was a belief by military officials that women at the protests were already disreputable and likely to not be virgins. An anonymous military source noted at the time that the female protestors were not like "your daughter or mine," as many of them camped out with men in Tahrir (Hafez 2014: 174; Langohr 2012: 22).

Langohr (2013) described how sexual violence became regularized in protests from mid-2011, but that November 2012 marked a shift in activist approaches in dealing with protest violence. Protests against the Muslim Brotherhood President, Mohamed Morsy, which marked the Mohamed Mahmoud anniversary, witnessed the assault and rape of activist Yasmine El-Baramawy, discussed in one of the opening scenes in Chapter 1, and 17 other women, some of them with knives (El-Sheikh & Kirkpatrick 2013).

These cases demonstrated a new phenomenon of organized attacks that concerned gender violence and anti-sexual harassment activists. This was eventually termed the “Circle of Hell,” where hundreds of men would form concentric rings around a single woman, assaulting and raping her continuously for up to an hour (FIDH 2013). Langohr explored activist’s perceptions of who was behind these attacks. Many initially agreed that they were instigated by hired *baltigiyya* (thugs). Perceptions would later change that these mobs represented a mix of state hired and average individuals.

As the Revolution started and the reality of violent sexual harassment and assaults in Tahrir Square became known, increasing numbers of individuals looked for the means to volunteer and/or to do something more substantive against the phenomenon.

Meanwhile, scholars honed in on issues pertaining to politically commissioned sexual violence and new uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Despite problems with HarassMap’s technology, which existed at the time of data collection for this project, a number of scholars began exploring how digital activism, more specifically crowd-mapping or crowdsourcing, allowed activists to challenge the patriarchal gender order (ElSayed 2013; Rabie 2013; Skalli 2014; Young 2014). Skalli, in particular, noted that newer generations of post-Revolution activists eschewed feminist labels to their gender activism, even if they were feminists in their own personal politics. She argued that many of these youth activists, including HarassMap staff and volunteers, found more resonance in a human rights-based identity, in part, because it was more gender inclusive, thereby allowing greater numbers of men into the movement. She highlighted the ambivalence among many newer activists toward prior feminist approaches in favor of, what she called, “Everyday Feminism” that focused more on everyday lives and not just

in political processes (2014: 255). Moreover, she maintained that technologies, like crowd-mapping and social media, offered new venues through which to challenge patriarchal norms that shamed and silenced women. This analysis compellingly argued that post-Revolution activists were not ignoring structural gender inequalities by focusing on public sexual harassment rather than politically commissioned sexual violence.

Beginning in 2012, other independent (non-registered), volunteer initiatives arose in addition to HarassMap. Many of these entities began their work online but the more prominent initiatives located their work primarily in the streets. As discussed in Chapter 1, Tadros (2014) examined three such initiatives: Harakat Bassma (Imprint Movement, hereafter, referred to just as Bassma), Shoft Taharosh (I Saw Harassment), and Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment (Opantish for short). Bassma was noted for their highly regimented street patrols, uniforms and lines of command, which Tadros likened to the army (2014:13). Such militarized forms of activism seemingly filled a void left by the lack of security following regime change, as well as the lack of concern by police and security forces when they became operational again. Bassma, for its part, publicly regarded their role as supporting and not usurping police functions. More recently, they have actively engaged with police forces when conducting outreach, stating that their greater mission is opening a dialogue with people about the issue of sexual harassment.

The phenomenon of mob sexual assaults in Tahrir galvanized activists to also organize in order to intervene and help women to safety. OpAntish emerged in response to the “Circles of Hell” that became prevalent in Tahrir Square after November 2012, the first anniversary of the Mohamed Mahmoud clash, when police violently suppressed and killed almost 50 protestors (Taha & Kortem 2013). They formed as a coalition of activists

from the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), Nazra for Feminist Studies, HarassMap, and others interested in rescuing women from mob assault. Activists devised teams with differing functions designed to facilitate the identification, extraction and escape of women from mob violence. These were the control room team that coordinated the process, the intervention team that physically pulled women from the mobs, and the safety team that waited in cars to drive women wherever they wanted to go, including hospitals that often left seriously injured women unattended for hours (Tadros 2014).

A philosophical approach to OpAntish work, which differed from other similar entities, was that female activists were an integral part of intervention in Tahrir. Intervention teams were a gendered mix, even though female OpAntish activists themselves were harassed and assaulted. However, Saad Zaghloul from Bassma noted that women in this situation were obstacles to intervention because they were targets for the mobs (Interview 2014). Other entities, such as Tahrir Bodyguard, which started with all male patrols but later changed tactics when they noticed that victims often did not trust male activists, and Ded el-Taharrush (Anti-Harassment Movement), which never formally participated in Tahrir (like Bassma) but had team members present, all also agreed that female activists were detrimental to intervention teams because male colleagues would be divided in their loyalties to their colleagues and the victims they were seeking to rescue. Such sentiments were noted by scholars and raised concerns among activists that this represented a paternalistic practice and reinforced notions that women were in need of saving. Scholars have cited changing perceptions within Tahrir Bodyguard that women were integral in interventions. Yet, they have not addressed the



gendered implications of these sentiments, often choosing instead to highlight the prominent roles women play within these organizations.

Finally, Shoft Taharush also formed in 2012 around the use of street patrols during the Eid holiday (Tadros 2014). Like HarassMap, Shoft Taharush was highly prominent in its street and media campaigns to raise awareness against the issue of sexual harassment, but also provided self-defense workshops for women to protect themselves against street violence. It differed from most other independent initiatives in that its strategic repertoire to combatting sexual harassment was far more mixed. As a subsidiary of ACT, an NGO whose larger mission is supporting and helping other civil society organizations build capacity, Shoft Taharush has been most visible in its political and news media advocacy against sexual harassment. They developed closer relations with the Ministry of Interior and the police, particularly around the 2014 development of Sexual Violence units inside of the ministry and several police stations that Shoft Taharush was allowed to monitor. Their mission is tied more to the larger issue of women's overall participation in the public sphere and politics, with its Director, Fathi Farid, often promoting another ACT initiative, Women in Parliament, and speaking about women's representation in government.

Beyond these movements, there has been little examination of the street activism that has arisen since the end of 2010, the way in which sexual harassment in Egypt was promoted as a problem, its complex nature, and its place within the gender order. Most agree it to be an aspect of patriarchal control but have not drawn on feminist scholarship that posits sexual harassment as a gendering process that maintains heteronormative social roles (Epstein 1997). Tadros (2013 a and b, 2014) offered some of the first analysis

that attempted to more clearly delineate politically motivated and socially motivated sexual assault, and Langohr (2013) also mentioned the connection between the more violent forms of protest sexual harassment and the less violent everyday forms present in the street. However, much of this discussion is still concerned with state tactics and raised additional fears that the depoliticization of sexual harassment has results in public perceptions that sexual harassment is a “social problem that requires social interventions” (Tadros 2013a: 5). The fear is that social interventions, without the concomitant political analysis, simply reinforce institutionalized patriarchy.

One additional event occurred in mid-2014 that was critical in the discourse around sexual harassment in Egypt. Following the subsiding of much, but not all, of the protests between the years 2011-2013, sexual harassment rose to the fore as a national problem after the mass sexual harassment of a female student in the College of Law at Cairo University (Mada Masr 2014). Mobbed by a group of young men after entering campus, the student was forced to hide in the bathroom until the police could escort her out of the university. While leaving, a throng of onlookers, many of them men, watched and catcalled the student. Cairo University’s president, Gaber Nasser, blamed the young woman for shedding her *‘abāyah* (black robe) when entering campus in violation of university policy – underneath, she wore pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and a *hijāb*, or headscarf, that he claimed were inappropriate (Lynch 2014). What resulted, though, was a concerted effort by a concerned group of Cairo University faculty members, in conjunction with initiatives, like HarassMap and Shoft Taharush, to develop a policy for combatting sexual harassment at the university.

The widespread public outcry also forced the government to denounce the event and to begin working on a new law that would incorporate *taḥarrush ginsy* into the legal infrastructure, but this was done with limited or no consultation with women's advocacy organizations. From 2008, the Taskforce for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence pushed a draft amendment that set better definitions and punishments for various forms of gender-based violence (FIDH 2014). A number of NGOs in this taskforce, such as ECWR and El-Nadim, promoted their own versions of the draft law, each with different foci, such as sexual harassment (ECWR) and domestic violence (El-Nadim). Until 2014, there was little movement on the amendments, though there were several discussions between the Taskforce and government entities, such as the National Council for Women (NCW), over the years. Following the Cairo University incident the government moved quickly to issue a new amendment to Article 306 of the penal code that, for the first time, added and defined *taḥarrush ginsy* in the law. However, women's advocacy groups criticized the law for narrowly framing the problem within the context of stalking and following, as well as for solely emphasizing the sexual motivations behind sexual harassment (El-Rifae 2014). Despite its serious shortcomings, the law offered community-based initiatives, like HarassMap, some degree of ammunition in their messaging around the criminality of sexual harassment.

### **HarassMap: Ending the Social Acceptability of Sexual Harassment in Egypt**

Few organizations were directly addressing the issue of sexual harassment when HarassMap officially "launched" in late 2010. ECWR was unique in operating a specific program that targeted this phenomenon, though other civil society entities were also

actively working to combat gender-based and sexual violence. NGOs, like the Al-Mar'a Al-Gedida, ADEW, EIPR and Nazra, also strove to adequately define and combat gender violence in their work, but sexual harassment did not arise as a specific focus until after the Revolution. Even then, sexual harassment was not within the purview of work for most formal NGOs with more expansive missions around gender-based violence. Sexual harassment became a feature of the larger issue of sexual violence that these entities sought to eliminate, with particular emphasis on the political implications around *taharrush ginsy*. The Taskforce for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence incorporated the issue of sexual harassment in their agenda of amending the penal code articles. Yet, the Taskforce's mission was broad-based legal reform on all forms of gender-based violence. Public sexual harassment was not a focal point until HarassMap formed and undertook approaches unique for gender activism in Egypt.

Digital approaches in particular raised HarassMap's profile to transnational levels, especially among international organizations that set HarassMap up as a model and a leader in local initiatives making innovative use of technology to combat gender violence. Employing the Ushahidi online platform, HarassMap was one of the first initiatives in Egypt to use crowdsourcing, and more precisely crowd-mapping, to bring sexual harassment into the public discourse. Crowdsourcing is defined as a method of employing an expanded network of individuals to generate information and develop solutions to solve a variety of problems (Barbier et al. 2012; Fahmy et al. 2014; How 2006). Underlying crowdsourcing is the notion that the public itself can contribute new information and provide new ways of understanding a particular issue. Crowd-mapping offers an additional spatial plotting of incidents on a map using precise latitudinal and

longitudinal coordinates. Through Ushahidi, which utilized GIS mapping technology built around Google Maps, HarassMap allows public members to point to a location on a map to identify where they either experienced or witnessed sexual harassment, as well as to upload a description of the incident that occurred. This map and the stories are publicly available for all to contribute to and use as a resource for understanding sexual harassment. Moreover, in partnership with a local telecom, the public can send an SMS that would also plot to a position on a map.

HarassMap maintained several goals with respect to Ushahidi. The first was the creation of a wider public dialogue on the problem of sexual harassment. At the time that HarassMap launched their interactive map, there was still widespread disbelief and non-acceptance that *taharrush ginsy* was a real phenomenon in Egypt. Crowd-mapping was intended to help break the silence around sexual harassment and give people an anonymous method for voicing their experiences. Second, crowd-mapping was also intended to inform a community-based approach and highlight specific areas of Cairo that could be targeted for street campaigns. As already mentioned, this facet of HarassMap's objective with crowd-mapping eventually shifted as problems with Ushahidi maintenance and SMS failures plagued the co-founders and staff members between 2011 and 2013, and as increasing numbers of volunteers made it possible and necessary to redesign the way in which community outreach programs were organized.

Despite online work, community outreach served as the primary methodological approach in HarassMap's strategic repertoire. In the first year of operation, the co-founders recruited 300 individuals across several governorates to run street campaigns. These numbers increased to 500 in 2012, 800 in 2013 and more than 1300 in 2014, with

volunteer teams in 23 of 27 governorates. HarassMap co-founders, and later hired staff, trained a corps of community captains. These were individuals that went through training in HarassMap's philosophy and methodology for changing social perceptions. Captains would then be responsible for recruiting their own team of community volunteers that would run weekly or monthly street outreach campaigns, and would also participate in various events where HarassMap wanted to have a presence to spread their message. As HarassMap increasingly became more professionalized, these trainings were turned into weeklong camps, which they called HarassMap Academy, where prospective captains would sit through a number of workshops on gender theory, myths around sexual harassment, running street campaigns, role-playing, team-building, and practice runs in a selected neighborhood where HarassMap staff would observe and offer feedback. In addition, HarassMap operated mobile training sessions, where staff members would travel across governorates to follow-up with local teams, offer additional trainings, and observe street operations. The purpose of these teams was to have Egyptians take direct control of the issue and convince their neighbors, one individual at a time, to stand up to sexual harassment.

As the number of volunteers continued to grow, so did HarassMap operations. The co-founders realized early that the work they wanted to do to combat sexual harassment was not something that could be done on a part-time basis. In 2011, the Canadian-based International Research and Development Center (IDRC) approached Chiao about funding HarassMap work. Without formal registration, and without an actual staff to undertake work, HarassMap was unable to accept external donor funding. Chiao and Ghazlan spent 2009-2010 exploring the option of formal NGO registration, but

various hurdles prevented them from going that route. After launch, they instead chose to formally incubate with another NGO, Nahdat el-Mahrousa, whose mission was to help start-ups build capacity. Once incubated, HarassMap was able to accept IDRC funding under the control of Nahdat el-Mahrousa, which managed formal compliance with government regulations around foreign funding. Two of the four co-founders quit their full-time jobs to concentrate on building HarassMap. In 2012, when IDRC funds disbursed, they designed four internal units and hired new staff to run them.

Community Outreach was one of these units, and the others, in part, were meant to help facilitate the work of this unit in the streets. Additionally, HarassMap built a Marketing and Communications Unit, responsible for streamlining their message, managing their online presence, and developing new messaging campaigns. IDRC funds were provided in order to run a specific research project that explored the efficacy of crowdsourcing, which required a new Research Unit. The Research Unit, though, as it developed also took on the mission of devising monitoring and evaluation methods to assess the progress of HarassMap's work overall, as well as to manage the Ushahidi map and analyze the data it generated. As new ideas and goals were being developed around changing social perceptions and behaviors with respect to sexual harassment, HarassMap also eventually built a fourth unit called Safe Areas (SA), which included a sub-program called Safe Schools and Universities (SSU). A fifth unit also exists, referred to as Global Replication, but contained no staff members other than Chiao. Because of the international attention HarassMap received, including winning the World Summit Youth Award, numerous requests came in from individuals in other countries looking to implement Ushahidi to similarly combat sexual harassment and sexual violence. Chiao

consulted with teams that replicated HarassMap's format in places like Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, India, Indonesia and more.

HarassMap's belief around sexual harassment was that it had become a socially accepted practice in Egyptian society. Social, political or economic reasons underlying the growth and persistence of sexual harassment, including state sanctioned violence, were viewed as rationalizations that denied the problem as a crime and a violation of rights. One of HarassMap's first messaging campaigns deployed via social media in 2012 was "*byitharrash lih?*" (Why Does He Harass?). Simply referred to by staff as the "The Myths Campaign," it involved countering 10 prominent myths around why sexual harassment existed, including the phenomenon of delayed marriage, sexual repression in Egypt's conservative society, and female dress. In a Tedx Talk conducted by Chiao in 2012, she noted that every myth or stereotype promoted around sexual harassment that either laid blame on the victim or, somehow, mitigated the responsibility of the harasser was nothing more than an excuse that reproduced the problem. Here, everyone was socially responsible to control themselves and to speak up if they saw someone being sexually harassed in public. As part of this philosophy, HarassMap argued that historic social values respecting women's integrity were no longer adhered to and that people ultimately allowed the practice to continue by failing to speak up when necessary. They promoted the notion that communities were much more integrated in the past. Accordingly, social responsibility was viewed as eroding, where people no longer worried about their neighbors and community. Within this framework, countering the bystander effect and reintroducing new norms of social responsibility became a central feature of HarassMap's community-based approach.



In addition, community outreach work sought to frame sexual harassment within the context of gendered norms in Egypt. A regular feature of the biannual HarassMap Academies, offered in the spring and fall of each year, was a 90-minute workshop called “The Gender Box.” In this workshop, community captains were enjoined to explore culturally defined roles for men and women, as well as the violence that each experienced for not adhering to those roles. Underpinning this was the goal of getting people to understand how gendered roles and violence, such as sexual harassment, results from patriarchal structures that privilege the masculine over the feminine. For the final 25-minute segment of the workshop, where the facilitator covered the root causes of gender-based violence, the guidelines stated:

“The rule is that men who are expelled from the hegemonic masculine are attributed feminine traits related to their gender expression and sexual orientation, whereas women who are expelled from the hegemonic feminine are attributed traits related to their honor and are subjected to relatively more graphic forms of violence. Facilitator starts explaining that the root causes of violence against women and girls are a combination of harmful gender beliefs and patriarchy” (HarassMap Gender Box Workshop Guidelines)

Moreover, at the HarassMap Academy in the fall of 2014, the Director of the Community Outreach Unit introduced the concept of “*al-mi‘yāriyya al-ghayriyya*” (heteronormativity) for the first time with the newest cohort of community captains. The workshop stressed the power imbalance (“*al-‘aylaqāt al-quwiyya*”) between men and women, the way that patriarchy sets up a binary system of gender (“*al-nizām al-thinnā’iy*”), as well as notions that a woman with uncontrolled sexuality will not be approved of within the culture. Hence, sexual violence serves as a means to control women’s bodies and sexuality, as well as to maintain the social order where only two recognized genders (male and female) exist within a structure that privileges (and regulates) sexual relations between men and women. HarassMap, for its part, sought to

frame sexual harassment, and all forms of sexual violence for that matter, within this normalized gendered context. They urged community captains to draw on these ideas to combat victim-blaming rhetoric used to excuse sexual harassment and to convince neighborhood residents (get them to agree) to intervene if they witnessed such practices.

### **Gender and Sexuality in Egypt**

In the planning stages of a new campaign that HarassMap intended to launch, a series of focus group sessions were held with both men and women in Cairo, the upper Egyptian town of Mansoura, and the Delta city of Tanta. The campaign aimed at reshaping values that prevented people from intervening when witnessing street sexual harassment, and the focus groups were designed to build the specific features of campaign messaging. The purpose of these sessions was to gain a better understanding of the values Egyptians from various classes, ages, and contexts held dear, how they viewed the issue of sexual harassment, and what factors would encourage or prevent them from speaking up against cases of sexual harassment that they witnessed. Organized by a marketing research firm, which conducted the work for a reduced rate given that the participating facilitators were personally interested in the issue and wanted to support the anti-sexual harassment efforts of initiatives like HarassMap, the first of these sessions was held in Cairo with four unmarried, urban, middle class women between the ages of 20-22. The facilitator of the focus group, whom HarassMap staff was told was one of the best in the firm, was an upper-middle class, married woman in her mid-to-late forties, with a gregarious nature suited to exciting people into conversation.

The two-hour discussion that unfolded in this first focus group, along with the post-session debrief between the facilitator and HarassMap staff, helps to illuminate important aspects of gendered norms underlying female sexuality and street sexual harassment in Egypt. This session primarily explored the experiences of sexual harassment – initially referred to by the facilitator and participants as *mu'āksa* (flirtation) in Arabic, and later as *taḥarrush ginsy* as the conversation wound through various themes – that the young girls and their friends faced on a daily basis. It canvassed their perspectives on why sexual harassment occurred, what the appropriate responses were, what freedoms women had in public, and how men should behave. Additionally, the young girls were asked what values they felt were missing in society today and their perspectives on why most people did not speak up to help when witnessing a woman get sexually harassed. What developed as the conversation explored these issues in detail was a degree of restrained tension between the moderator and participants, as well as the evident dominance of certain voices over others among the participants, where some participants appeared more reticent to speak about their experiences and others had fewer problems in this regard.

Deliberations about the kinds of actions that constituted public sexual harassment were a prominent feature of the conversation, where comments and words received a great deal of attention. Comments arose at several points in the dialogue and were broached in differing ways. Initially, the moderator encouraged the girls to identify harassing behaviors. Participants went back and forth on the kinds of comments that constituted sexual harassment, with vulgar comments distinguished from compliments. Compliments were not viewed as a form of sexual harassment, though all of the

participants seemed to agree that “*shatīmah*” (cursing) was unequivocally problematic. At one point, the moderator asked a participant, who spoke about her brother, if he harassed girls in the street, but the young girl immediately denied that he did. Instead, she noted that her brother might comment on the beauty of a girl in a polite way, where he might state “*masha’allah aleyki*” (*masha’allah* being a term demonstrating appreciation or awe with respect to God’s will/creation), which could never be construed as annoying or insulting. At a later point in the conversation, the moderator then asked what sort of behaviors personally bothered or did not bother the individual participants. Here, compliments again arose, where two of the four girls, who were most dominant in the conversation, noted that they might enjoy the polite words and stares of young men, if those stares were not directed at their bodies but their faces. Some of the participants noted that men were free to stare and that could not be stopped, but stares at the chest – common especially for girls whose chests were “full” - or other areas were discomforting.

Among the most vocal in the group, there were some differing perspectives on women’s responses to being sexually harassed. There was general agreement that responses were absolutely required for a girl and that remaining silent after being harassed was not acceptable. In this case, silence was taken for (an unofficial form of) consent, where a girl was not openly stating but passively allowing a man to harass her. In fact, failing to respond was noted as contributing to continued sexual harassment as a man might be goaded to try and force a response from the girl. One participant argued that responding even if it made a girl look foolish was imperative, where her idea of responding included yelling, fighting and even hitting. Another participant, however, while in agreement that a response was important so as to show that a girl did not want

such sexual harassment, argued that not all men understood what they were doing and how sexual harassment affected women. In this case, speaking politely but firmly was also raised as a more appropriate course of action. This participant indicated that her sister actually urged the opposite, that she not respond to a harasser because to fight back was to also encourage continued sexual harassment, i.e. that ignoring it and moving on was the best way to stop the harassment whereas to counter it would be to incite an interaction that would potentially make the situation worse since a girl could never know how a man might act if she were to respond or fight back.

During one segment of the conversation on comments as a form of sexual harassment, the discussion flowed into a debate about women's rights when it came to how to dress in public. The below dialogue took place between the most dominant participant in the focus group and the facilitator (with the transliterated Arabic included):

- Participant: I always hear comments, always when I'm walking – I get a lot...  
(*lezam asma 'commentat, lezam wa ana mashya...bakhud kateer*)
- Facilitator: Why do you think you hear comments? Is it, for example, that your pants are too tight?  
(*Tiftikry bitakhdy commentāt lih? Hal, messalin, bantaloonyak dayiq ziyada?*)
- Participant: Ah
- Facilitator: You know this? ( 'arfa keda?)
- Participant: Ah
- Facilitator: Then why do you wear them? (*Tub, matilbisiy lih?*)
- Participant: I won't change it (*Mish haghayaru*)
- Facilitator: But why? (*Tub, lih?*)
- Participant: I'm going to do what I want, not for your sake or because you are weak [reference to a masculine you]. I won't change myself, I'm not your business. Also, I know this is my time and later the way I dress will change, naturally.  
(*Ana h 'amel illy ana ayyizza, mish ashān khatrak, ashān khater nefsak dāifa. Ana mish maghayara min nefsy, la', malaksh dawa bāya...ana 'arfa ana 'ada fatrity, b 'ad keda libsy hyitghayr, tabi'iy*).
- Facilitator: So you'll pass through your time, you mean you'll get married and grow older...  
(*Hat 'ady fatritik, aşdik hatgawizy, hatikbary, wa hatitgizy...*)
- Participant: I'm taking my rights. I won't have my rights effected because of you [masculine you] (*Bakhud haq'y...mish ha'athr fi haqqa ashān khater inta*)

Here the facilitator linked the participant's experience of sexual harassment to the way she dressed, despite the fact that earlier in the conversation the girls noted that all women in Egypt, regardless of how they dressed, experienced sexual harassment. Following this, the participant continued to argue that all individuals had the personal freedom to choose what they wore and how to dress. She questioned why it was forbidden/shameful (*haram*) for her to wear what she wanted, to have to change her choice of clothing, but it was not forbidden/shameful for men to sexually harass.

Throughout this conversation, a number of dynamics were at work that helped to shape the focus group session in particular ways. While the participants and the facilitator appeared to be of commensurate class backgrounds, the age differences between them was fairly significant, likely at least twenty years. They all dressed in similar Western-style clothing, though the young girls all wore headscarves (*hijāb*) while the facilitator was unveiled. The facilitator's gregarious nature helped to keep the conversation flowing, but her line of questioning often demonstrated an underlying conservatism, as well as inherent assumptions about the nature of sexual harassment and gendered norms. For instance, in the beginning when the participants had not yet warmed to each other, the facilitator attempted to goad them into discussing their personal experiences of sexual harassment by stating, "Come on, you're all young and beautiful. Of course, you have been harassed." This statement underscores a widespread stereotype in Egypt that public sexual harassment is a phenomenon experienced by younger women, and that, as a corollary, it is a transitional stage linked to immaturity and the lack of sexual awareness or appropriate sexual outlets. Moreover, it became clear that at least two of the four participants dominated the conversation, while the other two did not offer up much of

their own perspectives. What was not clear, however, was if these non-dominant participants had differing opinions and felt cowed into silence by the dominant personalities around them, or if they held any personal beliefs that prevented them from speaking up on such a sensitive subject (participants were not provided prior information by the marketing research firm of the focus group topic).

HarassMap staff members, for their part, observed the focus group session from the next room, separated by a one-way mirror. A post-focus group debrief was held in this room, where HarassMap and the marketing firm staff discussed lines of questioning that worked, ways to tweak the questioning, the goals of the sessions overall, and salient themes evident from the session. In this debrief, the facilitator's conservative views on sexuality became far more apparent. She ridiculed statements made by the dominant participant in the group, and also appeared to be put off by the participant's comportment. The participant often laughed, or tittered, while relating certain events. An example was when the participant discussed how her "*ṣāhib*" (boyfriend) would not defend her when she was sexually harassed in public, with him often claiming that he was unaware of her being harassed. She did so in laughing terms, while also making claims that such men did not demonstrate valued qualities associated with "*rigulla*" (manhood or masculinity). To HarassMap staff, the facilitator indicated her belief that the girl was "*mabsuta*" (happy or self-satisfied) and that she, as well as all of the girls in the session, enjoyed sexual harassment. She noted that the girls said one thing but that their description of their actions and beliefs indicated something else. For instance, the fact that the dominant participant willfully refused to change her style of clothing, despite believing that it contributed to sexual harassment, bolstered the facilitator's assumption that the girl

“*nāzla tit’ākis*” (went out to be sexually harassed). Here, the girl chose to dress in particular ways to deliberately attract male attention. The facilitator argued that the girl’s statement of being free (*hurra*) to dress as she wanted was problematic – “*mafīsh hāga ismaha inti hurra, ihna fī balad islamiyya*” (there is no such thing as you are free, we’re in an Islamic country) – and that a “*bint hurra*” (a free girl) was “*ayb*” (shameful) in this society. Moreover she continued to mock the participant by stating that her boyfriend would never marry her, nor would any other man, for that matter.

This exchange between the facilitator and participants, as well as the facilitator and HarassMap staff, underscores a number of facets of gender, sexuality, and sexual violence in Egypt that are linked to patriarchal control of the female body. This includes women’s comportment and their outward presentation of self in public, and the denial of female desire. In the above vignette, the dominant girls in the focus group were verbally assured, perhaps even felt to be “know it all’s” by the facilitator, and were seemingly amused or unabashed by their experiences of sexual harassment and their appearance in public space. Laughing while recounting stories and the lack of humility or self-censorship with respect to forms of dress were viewed almost as an affront by the facilitator. The girls’ inability to perform their victimhood in certain ways left them vulnerable to ridicule and attack by the facilitator, albeit indirectly behind their backs. In the protected setting of a market research firm where the facilitator and participants, while possibly of the same social class, were not of the same neighborhood locale, such disparagement (unknown to the participants) had little effect on their social standing and respectability. However, in most neighborhoods of Cairo, the circulation of such sentiments among neighbors, friends and kin can have a detrimental effect on women’s



respectability and, ultimately, their marriageability. A number of scholars have examined the issue of female respectability and marriageability, noting that marriage, and parenthood, are highly valued practices that most Egyptians strive to attain in order to become adults and complete/full individuals in society (El Kholy 2002; Hoodfar 1997; Singerman 1989). Therefore, how women and girls present their experiences of sexual harassment, and likely any form of sexual violence, impacts how the community at large perceives them, and what their options will be after the event.

The participants' description of women's comportment when responding to sexual harassment demonstrated the highly contentious way in which women negotiate their respectability in public when such events occur. The focus group participants all noted that women and girls must respond when sexually harassed in order to avoid any public criticism that they welcomed the attention. However, perspectives on the nature of this response differed in that some of the girls thought a fighting response important, perhaps in order to publicly demonstrate their outrage and distress, while others felt that respectability could be maintained through "*'adab*" (politeness). Nonetheless, one participant noted that her sister's advice was exactly the opposite, that ignoring the sexual harassment and moving on was a better approach because engagement here could also be seen as a form of inappropriate interaction that would stimulate the men to continue. In both scenarios, women were the ones enjoined to protect their bodies in ways that also kept them above reproach as having incited the violence they experienced. In this way, they could similarly maintain their reputations and preserve their prospects for the future.

Additionally, the above example draws attention to another aspect of gender and sexuality in Egypt. While women's bodies are sexualized and are seen as inciting men to

sexually harass, women themselves must demonstrate a lack of sexuality in public in order to maintain their respectability. When the participants noted that they enjoyed comments and, sometimes, the stares of young men, this ignited the ire of the facilitator, who argued that the girls enjoyed being harassed. The combination of dressing in inappropriate clothing, along with the admission of enjoying polite comments and stares, were signals to the facilitator that the girls were themselves displaying inappropriate sexual inclinations and were of loose respectability and morality, hence the caution that no man would marry them. For HarassMap staff, on the other hand, there was some degree of belief in the naiveté of the young girls. Accordingly, the young girls accepted the compliments of young men, falsely thinking that such compliments demonstrated a more sincere and genuine interest. In this case, the girls were failing to see how they were being objectified and inappropriately sexualized. In a conversation following the debrief, the HarassMap Director of Marketing and Communications further noted, though, that much of the sexual harassment that occurred in the street was not complimentary (it was disgusting, as she put it), and that it was also an expression of male mistrust of female sexuality and the need to control this sexuality through the act of shaming women.

Underlying the sentiment of impropriety, and even naiveté, however, is the lack of discourse on how the female body is a desiring entity, and that respectable women can (and should, perhaps, be free to) express their sexuality in public space. Feminist theory notes the gendered nature of public and private, where sexuality, particularly that of women and homosexuals, is limited to private spaces and the public is controlled and orderly, with properly behaved individuals (Duncan 1996: 130). Yet, patriarchal, heterosexual norms are infused in public practice and legal code, thus making the public

a site of heterosexual normativity (Duncan 1996; Valentine 1996). The heteronormative public in the Middle East is a space for men to express their sexual frustration through acts widely deemed complimentary, flirtatious, or playful with women; acts often excused as “boys will be boys” by Egyptian society. Women, on the other hand, are expected to cover their bodies, not turn the attentions of libidinous men, and not display any flirtatious or sexual inclinations of their own. In other words, the public space provides no room for female sexuality and there has not yet been a discourse that public female sexuality is not, in some way, transgressive (Donnan & Magowan 2012).

This is not to suggest that women enjoy being sexually harassed, that sexual harassment might be a form of sexual interplay between men and women, or that sexual harassment does not carry with it very serious and negative impacts on those who experience it. The above example is, in part, meant to demonstrate how sexuality politics in Egypt continues to reproduce notions of what it means to be a woman/female/feminine (and even man/male/masculine), where there is no appropriate expression of female sexuality in public. Also, anti-sexual harassment activists who are attempting to highlight the nature of patriarchal control over women’s bodies, disrupt gender binaries, challenge victim-blaming proclivities in Egypt, and to force accountability on (male) perpetrators and not (female) victims of sexual harassment have incompletely analyzed gender constructs in devising their messages. Anti-sexual harassment discourses have not broached the larger issue of female sexuality outside of its control by patriarchal society. In this way, activist challenges to patriarchy have not fully delinked women’s sexuality strictly from the private sphere, thus leaving women in public as desexualized entities fighting off the loose sexualization ascribed to them by patriarchal society.

### *The Complex of Honor and Shame*

The control of female sexuality, including the (self) policing of women's behavior and the desexualization of women in public, is rooted in historic notions around honor (*'ird* and *sharaf*) and shame (*'ar* and *ayb*) in Egypt. Classic texts, such as those on the Kabyle tribe of Algeria and the Awlad Ali Bedouin of Egypt, highlight the importance of both concepts with respect to the maintenance of the social order in tribal society, including familial and interpersonal relations (Abou-Zeid 1966; Bourdieu 1966). According to Bourdieu, notions of honor are embedded in social systems where the personal sense of self is largely understood through the perceptions of others:

“The point of honor is the basis of the moral code of an individual who sees himself always through the eyes of others, who has need of others for his existence, because the image he has of himself is indistinguishable from that presented to him by other people. ‘Man is through men; God alone,’ the proverb runs, ‘is God through himself’... Respectability, the reverse of shame, is the characteristic of a person who needs other people in order to grasp his own identity and whose conscience is a kind of interiorization of others... Defined essentially by its social dimension, respectability must be conquered and defended in the face of everyone...” (Bourdieu 1966: 211).

In this context, honor can be acquired and ascribed, attained and lost, according to how individual public comportment and the family to which one is born is perceived by the wider society. Reputation and respectability, therefore, become key aspects in the maintenance of honor and the avoidance of shame associated with misconduct. Here, respectability may be viewed as a process through which women must demonstrate their modesty and physical separation from men through particular forms of outward covering, as noted by both Hoffman-Ladd (1987) and Abu Lughod (2002). It is important to note here that honor and shame are concepts that crosscut religion and can be found among Muslim and Christian populations throughout the Middle East. Dodd (1973) argued that there is no specific Islamic injunction regarding honor that can be found in the Qur'an,

and that honor is a secular value inherited from pre-Islamic Arab culture (44).

Nonetheless, he stated, Islamic ethical precepts tied to sexuality and women's bodies can be seen as bolstering pre-Islamic constructs of honor and shame. This is critical to recognize because a wealth of literature has examined women's sexuality in Islamic societies, where paternalistic discrimination is evident. Yet, this paternalism, as well as sexual violence linked to Islamic norms that help to regulate sexuality, is not unique to Islamic contexts.

In tribal Arab societies, honor is both maintained by the individual, usually men, and by the group, or family. An individual's loss of honor is reflected as the family's loss of honor, which may be difficult to regain depending on the nature of the offense that compromised familial honor to begin with. Members of the family are implicated in the monitoring of its other members, and selves, to ensure respectable comportment in public and that there can be no slander against the individual, and therefore the family. This extends to women, for whom the largest offense to familial honor is the loss of virginity through pre-marital sexual relations, the lack of chastity, and even the hint of sexual impropriety (Kozma 2011). Abou-Zeid (and other authors since) explored how the honor of the family is closely tied with the honor of women (*'ird*) in Arab societies, though it is unclear whether women, like men, can maintain *'ird* or are simply vessels for it. Abou Zeid claimed that the home (*bayt*), inclusive and representative of the family, is sacred, private, and the refuge of women (*harīm*). The sacredness of home is matched by the sacredness of women's bodies, therefore entrance into the home is highly restricted and the assault on women is the assault on the family as a whole. Accordingly, not only is the family responsible for protecting and controlling female sexuality to avoid gossip,

slandorous accusations, and the shame (*‘ar*) that goes hand in hand with this, but women are themselves responsible for restricting their behavior and preserving their bodily integrity. Honor lost through sexual misconduct cannot be easily regained. According to Abou-Zeid, among the Bedouin, it was not uncommon for women of questionable reputation to disappear and for families to regain honor lost through the sexual (mis)conduct of one of its women by “getting rid of her” (1966: 253).

Outside of the tribal context, honor, shame, and respectability remain important concepts in the regulation of urban social relations (Dodd 1973). While tribal societies were not strictly sex segregated, the division between men and women was typically more rigid than in contemporary urban contexts where women are indelible features of public life. Here, historic codes of honor are challenged by a number of factors, including changing family structures, the disconnection of families to their extended rural kin network, exposure to new norms of gender and sexuality through media, the increasing normalization of public gendered interactions, and the wide degree of individual mobility, where policing family members becomes more difficult as they move about the city. Dodd (1973) argues that despite the seeming challenges presented by urbanization, monitoring and behavioral control continues to persist at neighborhood levels, where most people spend their lives interacting regularly with their community neighbors. The community itself becomes a fictive kin network, supplanting the historically extended tribal or rural family. Communities are a vital force behind the surveillance of its members and the maintenance of individual and familial respectability and honor. Women’s comportment still remains a central facet in the maintenance of family honor. The urban context has generated more nuance in the discursive uses and understanding of

*ird*, yet women's uncontrolled sexuality is still critically linked to the loss of honor.

Given this, women's public behavior in the urban context must still conform to social norms that help to preserve their reputation and respectability.

Chief among these social norms is modesty, or "*hayā*" (Hoffman-Ladd 1987). Like honor, modesty is a conceptually fuzzy term, with undoubted age and class-based implications. However, as demonstrated in the above example of the HarassMap focus group, it generally includes a range of behaviors centered on women's externalized bodily display, represented through physical forms of dress, and their internalized behavioral sensibility, as exemplified by certain qualities of comportment, such as shyness. A great deal of scholarly attention focuses on how women in public, or in view of any man that is not a close blood kin (*mahram*), are enjoined to protect their physical beauty or charms (*maḥfātīn, zinā*) by covering their bodies and donning the veil (*hijāb*). Multiple analyses explore the complex nature of veiling practices and changes in women's dress that have taken place over the last century, particularly in relation to the women's movement in Egypt where the symbol of change was the iconic figure of Hoda El-Sharaawi, noted for publicly removing her face veil (Badran 1996; El-Guindi 1999; Macleod 1987; Mernissi 1991; Rugh 1986; Zuhur 1992). Salient among these analyses are how veiling redefines public space.

El-Guindi (1999) argued that codes of modesty as theorized within Muslim societies represent a form of ethnocentric understanding of the division of space into the binary public-private. She notes that the boundary between the public and private is actually porous, where veiling converts public into private spaces, protecting the sanctity of women's bodies when not at home. Scholars of women's public participation in the

region proffer similar arguments, maintaining that the veil signals women's respectability within the context of shifting socioeconomic practices that challenge their traditional roles at home (Macleod 1987). However, the reverse is also postulated with respect to the home, which can be converted from private to public through the use of *mashribiyya*, or wooden, latticework screens that either cover windows or are erected as stand-alone screens within the home. These *mashribiyya* allow women to see out but not be seen, and does not confine women from public interactions. In her analysis of women's dress in Egypt, Rugh (1986) highlighted how modesty garments, inclusive of dresses, robes and lengthier forms of head coverings, not only protect women from strangers, but also allow for a range of signaling tactics that help to define space in particular ways. Here, clothing styles themselves signify when space become contentious for women. Women cover or refuse to remove their outer modesty garments when in the presence of those that are not *maḥarim* (singular *maḥram*). Similarly, particular styles and movements of clothing may also subtly indicate a woman's availability with respect to marriage, where "fitted dresses and bright colors, a shy demeanor, and industrious, sensible attention to tasks at hand, graceful adjustment of drapes and scarves, are all irresistible inducements to the romantically inclined young man" (Rugh 1986: 148). A woman demonstrates her interest by coyly covering and partially withdrawing, but it should not necessarily be assumed that a woman signaling her availability is similarly expressing sexual inclinations, as partner preferences may be made based on a range of variables that are contingent to the individuals involved and the context in question. Having said this, coyness as described by Rugh may offer potential insights into how women negotiate sexual boundaries.



Ultimately, though, modesty, and therefore respectability and honor, are generally preserved through the act of covering, or hiding, the body and, in many cases, the head.

The religious, specifically Islamic, basis for both veiling and the maintenance of female modesty and respectability has been extensively covered in the academic literature. This section does not canvass the whole of this topic, and instead centers on several concepts crucial to understanding the regulation of women's bodies and sexuality in the Middle Eastern context. The first is the notion of *zinā*, which may be interpreted in one of several ways, including as a woman's physical adornment, i.e. parts of their bodies considered private, or as illicit, pre-marital sexual relations. Hoffman-Ladd cited Qur'anic passages central to, and highly debated, around the control of women's "adornment," including verse 24:31: "Tell the believing women to avert their eyes and to preserve their chastity and not to show their adornment (*zinā*) except that which appears (*ma zahara minhā*), and to draw their shawls over their bosoms and not to show their *zinā* except to their husbands..." (1987: 29). Interpretations of this verse and that which constitutes *zinā* are contentious, particularly in relation to veiling practices and whether the protection of female modesty extends to the covering of the hair. Hoffman-Ladd notes that the face, hands, and feet are minimally referenced by the statement "that which already appears." Notwithstanding the issue of *hijāb*, many interpret from this passage that physical modesty for Muslim women in public includes the covering of the body from the neck to ankle, and the wrists, usually in loose clothing that conceals the form.

In addition to *zinā*, the related concept of *ʿawra* is similarly important. Like *zina*, *ʿawra* is also defined as the intimate parts of the body, but extends to nakedness, and is applicable both to men and women. The same verse quoted above continues on to say

that the only men to whom women may display their *zina* are those men *maḥarim* to her, including fathers, brothers, sons, nephews, male slaves/attendants that “lack vigor,” and children that know nothing of women’s nakedness (*‘awra*). Other verses include those enjoining all Muslims to cover their private parts to protect them from evil (Quran 7:26), as well as more specific verses encouraging the same just for women in order that they be protected (Quran 33:59). Varying translations of the Quranic verse 7:26 interpret private parts instead as “shame,” where private parts/shame is mentioned in the Quran with the term *sawa’*, which translates to wickedness, damaging, and harmful. According to Ball (2012), the connotations around *‘awra* with respect to women include shame and the need to conceal. This refers not just to the private parts alone but also extends to the entire body of a woman, as well as her voice. “While the term therefore applies most usually to the genitals as those parts associated with sexual arousal or intercourse, the term operates as a powerful motif for conceptions of female sexuality in traditional patriarchal arenas of the Arab world, in which female sexuality is deemed a private rather than public matter” (Ball 2012: 73). While the Quran speaks similarly to men of the need to cover and maintain modesty, little analytic attention is directed at the issue of male modesty. Within this framework, women’s bodies, and even their voices, assume connotations of shame and wickedness that, therefore, require concealment.

Furthermore, Mernissi (1987) theorized what she sees as the Islamic view of male-female dynamics and female sexuality overall. She argues that there is an explicit and an implicit theory of female sexuality operating in Muslim societies, where the explicit theory views men as aggressive and women as passive, and the implicit theory sees the subjugation of women as a necessary practice to protect society from the

destructive power of women's sexuality (1987: 30-34). Accordingly, women's sexuality is active and underlying the seeming inequalities between male and female sexuality is an inherent awareness that women also are sexual beings, with sexual desires no different than that of men. Her argument - and that of other scholars, for that matter - is that Islamic precepts enjoin both men and women to enjoy each other, but within tightly delineated strictures. She employs *zinā* in its other sense, that which refers to the illicit nature of sexual interactions, and maintains that pre/non-marital relations became highly problematic and sinful in Islam (also, Ali 2006). Here, marriage is a means of avoiding the sin of *zinā*. However, marriage and the system of modesty and honor within which women became subjugated, she argues, were designed to control rampant female sexuality supposedly existent in the pre-Islamic period. Drawing on Freud, she further contends that there is fear in Islam (and any patriarchal society) of this image of the aggressively sexual female who disrupts the social order, driving society into *fitna*, or chaos. The sexually uncontrollable woman is also one for whom paternity cannot be assured. Mernissi only extends her argument on paternity to the issue of divorce, where women go through a waiting period (*idda*) to ensure they have not been impregnated by their former husbands before taking a new husband, as the marital bed is, historically, what determined patrimony in Islam (Hasso 2011). The control of women's bodies and sexuality through codes of modesty intended to protect female and family honor developed in response to the prevention of *fitna* and to maintain the social order.

The intent of this discussion is not to imply any overly deterministic notions around systems of honor, modesty codes or the way in which religion governs, or oppresses, women's sexuality. Many Muslim women are deeply committed to their faith

and female Muslim scholars attempt to look beyond misogynistic readings of religious text, doctrine and jurisprudence to highlight the far more inclusive nature of divine messaging and Islamic practice, contesting many of the above precepts that constrain women's participation in religion and society (Barazangi 2004; Barlas 2002; Wadud 1999). Accordingly, modesty may work more as the way in which women improve upon and demonstrate their piety and faith in God, rather than as the instantiation of codes of honor that subjugate women to male control (Boulanour 2006). Moreover, how such tenets work in practice is often incoherent, with many other factors, such as education, new forms of consumerism, and transnational rights activism, playing a role in shaping norms around female sexuality, male-female dynamics, and women's public participation (Dodd 1973; Kozma 2011). This discussion was simply intended to highlight prevailing notions that have circulated, in shifting and inconsistent fashion, within many Arab societies, and which play a role in the way violence has played out in the lives of many, but particularly for women.

### **Gender Violence, Sexual Harassment and Heteronormativity**

Gender violence as a concept arose in the 1970's within the context of the second wave feminist movement in the West, which, in part, targeted critical issues of violence facing women worldwide, including rape, domestic abuse, and workplace sexual harassment (Baker 2008; Merry 2009). New analyses on gender at this time, began to explore the nature of gendered power and patriarchal control that facilitated women's unequal status and vulnerability to violence in multiple spheres. The family was noted as a critical component here. Millet (1969) argued that the family was a "mirror" of society,

both reflecting on and reflective of social practice. She noted that the family instituted a great deal of power over its members, particularly female members since men retained a privileged position, with the father serving as the family's central figurehead. This was also because, according to Millet, reproduction and socialization were the primary functions of families, and, for this reason there remained a need to legitimate women and children through their connection to men in the family (1969: 35). Though not expressly stated, the sense here is that paternity was a central concern of the patriarchal family unit, and control of women's sexuality, in part, helped to guarantee the integrity of the patriline, as well as male investment in the family that drew on male economic power. Socialization served to reproduce patriarchal practice, but methods of control, force and violence were also part of the self-regulation of this system. Millet theorized that the use of sexual force was particular to patriarchal control, where shame is often associated with sexual aggression (1969: 43-46). Like Millet, Merry (2009) also noted the way in which practices of gender violence resulted from localized familial configurations and patterns of marriageability in each culture. Here, the boundaries between family and community, as well as the significance attached to female chastity and virginity with respect to marital practices, similarly played a role in how the control of female bodies, or the violence enacted upon women, played out.

In this period of second wave feminism, analyses centered on varying aspects of sexual violence, which helped to foment the rape and battered women's movements (Rose 1977; Tierney 1982). Sexual harassment, with an emphasis on workplace forms of harassment, also came into consideration at this time. Growing out of the rape crises movement of the 1970's, sexual harassment gained legal momentum through the 1980s

and 1990s, primarily in the United States where anti-sexual harassment activism and laws were most active and progressive. With respect to anti-sexual harassment activism, scholars have argued that the US women's movement was particularly successful because of the broad-based nature of its activism, which included blue and white collar female workers, as well as the participation of African American women who pursued numerous legal cases against their employers. Coupled with the expansive nature of sexual harassment activism was the relative receptiveness of the political structure, coming off of the heels of the civil rights movement, in helping to reform legal and corporate structures to create safer environments for female workers (Baker 2008; Morewitz 1996; Zippel 2006). Additionally, Baker highlighted the multiple strategies employed by feminist activists, from community-based to political activism to change perceptions at multiple levels of society.

Sexual harassment in US law, underpinned by feminist theorizing on violence as an expression of gendered control, came to be viewed as a form of sex-based discrimination that impacted women's economic rights and was codified in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As such, sexual harassment was an act of discrimination targeting women because of their sex as female (and not necessarily motivated by sexual inclinations). The law noted that men as a group did not similarly suffer this form of gendered control, even though individual men might suffer sexual harassment (Baker 2008; MacKinnon 1979). Referred to as *quid pro quo* sexual harassment, women suffered under the threat of the loss of their jobs by not submitting to the sexual demands of bosses. "Many feminists argued that sexual harassment was an issue of violence against women. They borrowed from anti-rape theory the idea that rape was a matter of power,

not sex, and applied this perspective to sexual harassment, arguing that sexual harassment was primarily motivated by men's desire to control women..." (Baker 2008: 94). Legal definitions were later expanded to include hostile work environment in situations where women did not lose their jobs, but continued to suffer discrimination for refusing sexual advances.

In contrast to the situation in the United States, Zippel noted that anti-sexual harassment legislation in the European Union, along with concomitant legal protections for women, were more problematic because EU law was not grounded in feminist notions of gender. Instead, she argued that the EU took a more expansive view of sexual harassment, which was predicated on an equitable notion of the rights of all individuals. Unlike in the United States, sexual harassment was defined as economic discrimination rather than sex discrimination, which left open the possibility that it was not sex-specific. Female victims of sexual harassment could be counter-sued by their harassers in court, thus hindering women from speaking up (Zippel 2006).

Early work on sexual harassment in the US and Europe centered rather narrowly on the workplace and women's economic rights. Analyses continued to highlight women's vulnerability in male dominated work environments and how patriarchy conditioned silence – or even passive (forced) consent - from women, or placed blame on them when harassed (Cairns 1997; Thomas and Kitzinger 1997). Street sexual harassment, or public forms of sexual harassment, received lesser degrees of attention but also generated continued theoretical insights into the nature of gendered violence. Like workplace sexual harassment in the early years of activism, defining the forms of public behavior that constituted street sexual harassment were difficult, perhaps more so because

the effects were often psychological and did not, seemingly, directly challenge women's economic livelihoods as with workplace sexual harassment. In particular, the notion of sexual harassment as a form of sexual terrorism arose as a salient method of framing the seriousness around the problem (Ilahi 2008b; Kissling 1991; Larkin 1997). Kissling (1991) noted that generating fear was a critical facet of patriarchal control in public, while others highlighted how the aggregate experiences of constant public sexual harassment were, in fact, threatening to women's well-being. For the Egyptian context, Ilahi (2008b) underscored the view of women's sexuality as a source of *fitna* (chaos) that needed to be reigned-in to maintain social order. Other analyses explored sexual harassment as produced within and reproducing a heteronormative gender division.

In her analysis of sexual harassment faced by members of the LGBTQ community, most especially that experienced by young gay men, Epstein (1997) took issue with historic feminist approaches that denied the biological implications around male-female interactions and posited sexual harassment strictly within heteronormative gender relations – as only male power and control over females. She noted that heterosexuality assumed normative status, i.e. all individuals were automatically assumed to be straight. Current analysis only interrogated sexual harassment as the *expression* of a particular heterosexual power imbalance, and did not theorize how it, in turn, *reproduced* the heteronormative gender order. Sexual harassment was constructed within a framework where it was “seen to be simply the expression of men's (biological) needs to pursue potential sexual partners in the search for immediate sexual satisfaction” (Epstein 1997: 158). Epstein challenged theorizing that distinguished the sexual harassment of women from that of men, as if these acts of violence were rooted in separate



problematics. Instead, she argued that the sexual harassment of both young girls and boys underscored how sexual harassment served as a gendering tactic, or “the production of heterosexual girls and boys” (Epstein 1997:162). Sexual harassment was naturalized as the actions of real men, and accordingly, she argued, young gay men that were harassed were bullied into more culturally accepted masculine behaviors or denied their humanity.

The issue of the reproduction of heteronormative gender relations finds resonance in the Egyptian context, where the male-female marital unit is privileged. As discussed above, marriage provides the only acceptable outlet through which men and women in Egypt are able to express their sexuality. Homosexuality, while widely existent, has been viewed as a perversion, and state interventions with respect to homosexuality treat it as a threat to Egyptian national identity (Pratt 2007). The family, therefore, built around heterosexual pairings, serves as the critical foundation for the regulation of sex, sexual norms, and is invested in ensuring the marriageability of daughters. The honor of the family is intimately tied to perceptions of the sexual behavior of its female members. Through codes of modesty, which inform a variety of public practices, families seek to enforce and women seek to maintain their respectability and reputations to avoid the shame attached to sexual transgressions. Forms of sexual violence, such as sexual harassment, serve to maintain control over, primarily, women to shame them, and more pertinently, to remind them of their appropriate (female) roles in society. Akin to Pratt’s (2007) argument regarding the torture of homosexual men in Egypt, sexual harassment assuages gendered insecurities in a social, economic and political context that appears to threaten the family unit; a context where marriage is made increasingly difficult and

livelihoods more challenging to maintain. In this scenario, sexual harassment in Egypt, whether everyday or politically commissioned, affirms the heteronormative order.

### **Gender Violence and Honor in Egyptian Law**

Honor and modesty are concepts articulated in articles of the Egyptian penal code that punish gender violence offenses. The Taskforce for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence in Egypt that was founded in 2008 has been particularly concerned with a number of issues evident in these laws. In an interview with a former Taskforce participant from the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), Magda Boutros, she noted that one of the most significant of these issues is better defining differing aspects of gender violence, including providing a more expansive understanding of what constitutes rape and eliminating the deep connotations of honor and shame within the wording of the various articles that punish it (Interview 2014). Boutros's assessment was echoed by Amal ElMohandes, Director of the Women Human Rights Defenders program at Nazra for Feminist Studies, which has also worked as part of the Taskforce to advocate for changes in both the existing penal code and family code (Interview 2014).

Spread across two separate sections of the penal code, there are four specific articles that define and punish crimes of sexual violence. These four articles employ terms that connote shame arising from violations of honor and modesty and link them to the moral order. Part 4 of the penal code, titled "*Htk al-irḍ wa ifṣād al-akhlāq*" and translated as Indecent Assault and the Corruption of Morals, punishes the crimes of rape, incest, child molestation, and adultery and connects them all within a system of moral decay. These are visible in the below three articles:

Article 267 – Whoever lies with a woman without her consent (*waqa ‘ontha bi ghir redaha*) shall be punished with permanent or temporary hard labor. If the felon is from the victim’s ancestors, or is a paid servant to her or to the aforementioned persons, he shall be punished with permanent hard labor.

Article 268 – Whoever indecently assaults a person by force of threat, or attempts such assault, (*Kul min htk’ird insaan bilquwwa aw biltahdeed*) shall be punished with hard labor for 3 to 7 years. If the victim of said crime has not attained complete 16 years of age, or the perpetrator of the crime is among those prescribed in the second clause of

Article 278 – Whoever commits in public a scandalous act against prudency (*fe’lan fadehan mokhelan bi al-haya’*) be punished with detention for a period not exceeding one year or a fine not exceeding three hundred pounds.

The term “*htk’ird*” in Article 268, perhaps the most widely understood term for rape, draws on historic notions of the honor (‘*ird*’) of the family, in which the control of women’s sexuality is tantamount. Rape, translated as the “indecent assault” against a woman, is popularly considered shameful not only of the women but of their family (Shaaalan et al. 1983). As noted by activists like ElMohandes, the phrase “*waqa ‘ontha bi ghir redaha*” in Article 267 is also considered highly problematic by activists because it limits the victims of rape strictly to women (‘*ontha*’), eliminating the possibility that men may also be raped. According to the Nazra, FIDH, Uprising of Women in the Arab World study, this phrasing in the penal code “does not comply with international norms and jurisprudence,” which “defines rape in a gender-neutral way” (2013: 39). Similarly, the term *haya’* (modesty, translated in English here as “prudency”) in Article 278 is linked to the system of honor, where honor is maintained through the modesty of women. The term *haya’* here is situated within a context where violations of women’s modesty are considered scandalous, or lewd, acts (*fe’lan fadehan*), thus deterring women from wanting to prosecute crimes that may be viewed as a scandalous loss of their modesty.

The fourth of these articles exists in Part 7 of the penal code, centered on Slander, Cursing and the Divulging of Secrets. Article 306 illegalizes any “outrage to one’s honor

or dignity/modesty,” or *khadsh el-hayā*’. This law is understood to mean that any sexually deviant act perpetrated within the sightline of a woman— an act that embarrasses, offends and psychological harms a woman - is criminal. Moreover, modesty here can be extended to what a woman hears, also signifying behaviors now thought of as verbal harassment (FIDH 2013). As already noted for the Noha Rushdie case above, prior to 2014, Article 306 served as the legal basis for prosecuting crimes of sexual harassment, when they (limitedly) occurred.

Activists note that the framing of these laws prevents women from seeking legal redress out of larger fears that they will be viewed as “tarnished” (FIDH 2014: 19). Currently, Egyptian law only recognizes rape as the penile penetration of the female vagina, thus eliminating the possibility that men can be victims of rape and that it is perpetrated by objects other than the penis. It normalizes male-female sexual interactions and punishes those that transgress the honor of women, and their families. Expanding and neutralizing the language, therefore, have been critical in making the law more equitable and encouraging women (and men) to seek legal remedies when their bodies are violated.

Until 2014, the lack of legal stipulations for sexual harassment meant that offenses, when tried were done so within this framework that implied women’s ruin. However, following the Cairo University incident, the government of El-Sisi approved an amendment to Article 306 on modesty, which added *taharrush ginsy* to the legal lexicon for the first time. The amendment states:

Article 306a - To be punished by prison a duration not less than 6 months and a fine not less than 3000 Egyptian pounds and not to exceed 5000 Egyptian pounds, or one of these two punishments all those who confront others in a public space a private one or where one is present with permission by making forward actions, insinuations or hints that are sexual or pornographic whether by signals, words or action and by any means including wired and wireless communication methods. And punishment is by prison not less than a year and a fine not less than

5000 Egyptian pounds and not to exceed 10000 Egyptian pounds and by one of these punishments if the crime is repeated by the perpetrator via following or stalking the harassed.

Article 306b - It is considered sexual harassment if the crime referred to in Article 306 (a) of this law is committed with the intention of the perpetrator receiving from the harassed benefit of a sexual nature, and the perpetrator is punished by prison not less than a year and a fine not less than 10000 Egyptian pounds, and not to exceed 20000 Egyptian pounds or one of both punishments.

The varying civil society entities working on gender based violence and sexual harassment issues welcomed this addition to the law, yet the criticism leveled at the government has focused on the narrow way in which it defined sexual harassment. Here, the law constrained sexual harassment to its sexual or pornographic nature, as well as to the context of stalking and following (El-Rifae 2014). Without an underlying gender analysis, the law encapsulates sexual harassment within the framework of shame and an offense against modesty. It is now part of a small constellation of articles that link honor to women's sexuality, and the loss of honor to the loss of their bodily integrity.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the phenomenon of sexual harassment in Egypt by exploring the context in which it came to be understood as a problem and the history of social and political activism around it. Prior to 2005, sexual harassment, as *taharrush ginsy*, was not a concept that Egyptian civil society or the wider public understood, though Chapter 4 will delve further into the history of terminological usages of *taharrush ginsy* and key conceptual shifts since the turn of the millennium. Important here is the way in which the term *taharrush ginsy* was appropriated by NGOs, like ECWR, to frame the problem of sexual harassment as one of gender violence. Additional frames, however, in the early years of activism presented sexual harassment as a largely social problem.

Concomitantly, activism on the problem was focused on social change at the community and street levels and did not directly target the state for both sponsoring the use of sexual violence in protest and detention settings, or for enabling an environment where sexual harassment was tolerated by failing to enforce laws to protect women in public. This left ECWR open to criticism by both activists and scholars for depoliticizing sexual harassment by failing to include a political analysis of the role of the state in perpetuating sexual violence in its strategic approach, thereby avoiding the state as harasser in its discourse. Moreover, its focus on everyday sexual harassment left ECWR vulnerable to critiques that it was demonizing Arab boys and young men.

These critiques of anti-sexual harassment efforts focused on abuses of state power or the corporatization of civil society work, however, similarly failed to take a more expansive view of the way in which patriarchal power ordered both social and political practice. Amar (2011) argued that the state was involved in gendering respectability politics, attacking young women's honor and driving them out of the public space. As part of this argument, sexual harassment was postulated as the perversion of state practice. Yet this perversion occurred within a wider system of gender that privileged a heteronormative duality, where the male-female dynamic was naturalized, and where female sexuality was not tolerated outside of the marital context. In public, women's sexuality was controlled, in part, through normative concepts informed by Islamic practice that stressed the danger inherent in their bodies. Here, women's bodies were 'awra and the potential source of *fitna*, or social chaos. Controlling female sexuality through codes of modesty that protected their respectability, and therefore honor, also protected women's marriageability and ensured the integrity of the patrilineal family. In

addition to this, however, violence was also a method through which male sexual aggressiveness found expression, as a means of shaming women into modest behavior.

The independent initiatives that arose from late 2010, such as HarassMap, have maintained an intense focus on community-based, street level activism, while the civil society sector has continued on with gender violence advocacy and promoting improved legislation and enforcement to better serve women's needs. HarassMap, for its part, has included multiple levels of analysis in its work and drawn on feminist and psychological literature to contest gender binaries and gender stereotypes, but also doing so by targeting bystanders to change their perceptions and behaviors. In the following chapters, different facets of HarassMap's work will be further explored to make visible the way in which their street activism is also a form of political activism.

### CHAPTER 3: THE STREET, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND MEDIATING TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS TO COMBAT GENDER VIOLENCE

“So, I think those international human rights ideas are well integrated within our mission and our core understanding of HarassMap, and our core curricula and everything, but we’re taking baby steps into communicating them and we’re very cautious about how we talk... So, just to alleviate the tension, so we talk about like, for example, in Alexandria we were outreaching that guy who sells, that Salafi guy who sells books and CDs... right outside the gate of the Faculty of Law at Alexandria Uni... [W]e had just received a report a couple of days before of sexual harassment. A girl, she was going outside of uni and was harassed by a microbus driver. Eventually, she fell on the sidewalk and she got injured and when we went to that street we were talking to the people about the accident that happened two days ago, and obviously everybody said that this did not happen, that this girl is a phony. One of the people, when I told him that we, over the years, we collected more than 10,000 stories, he was, like, literally what he said was ‘they’re all bitches.’ So, we were talking to this Salafi guy and he was like ‘Yeah, this is awful but you know what’s also awful? I always see those couples making out here.’ And I’m like, making out here in the main street in front of Alexandria Uni? What do you mean by making out? He was like ‘They’re kissing and touching and walking hand in hand.’ And I’m like hey, okay, this is not what we’re talking about okay... And he’s, like, he starts to ask us about our religion... So, this for example... it’s a resistance reaction... they wanted to see us as that Westernized group who does not want men to harass women and who want to give more freedom to women, and God knows what happens when women get more freedom...” (Director Community Outreach, HarassMap)

This chapter explores the context within which grassroots anti-sexual harassment activism unfolds in Egypt. Visible in the above quote are important aspects of this context and the role that entities such as HarassMap play in bringing about social change. In part, the work of initiatives like HarassMap is made possible by and is well ensconced within transnational activism on women’s rights (as human rights), in which certain ethics or standards about women’s lives actively informs the discourses, or intersects with other aspects of the discourses, employed by these initiatives to facilitate change. Accordingly, such initiatives play a key role in mediating the middle ground, in moving between and bringing together differing norms, values, and practices circulating among various entities at multiple sociopolitical levels. In addition, this work directly engages with people, and seeks to change perceptions and behaviors of individuals rather than institutions. Here, the street serves as an active site for the negotiation of new social perceptions and behaviors. In the context of repressive state politics in Egypt,



community-based forms of engagement offer potentially long reaching effects. Examples from HarassMap's Community Outreach trainings provide useful insight on these issues.

Since early 2013, HarassMap has held its weeklong HarassMap Academy (HMA) every fall and spring to train volunteers to become community captains. The role of community captains is to build their own neighborhood teams that conduct regular street outreach days, where they speak with shop owners and passers-by – those they call “bystanders” - to dispel myths and stereotypes around gender and women's rights in public, as well as to convince them to speak up against sexual harassment when it is witnessed. HMA workshops are designed to teach captains how to conduct outreach, explore the nature of patriarchal society and gendered norms that orders the lives of both men and women and blames women for being sexually harassed, as well as the kinds of bystander responses that are prevalent when a woman is sexually harassed in public, among other issues. These HMA's represent a critical space, or a contact zone, where global and local ethics intersect to produce new, and even hybrid, ways of envisioning gendered relations, sexual norms, and social responsibility (Pratt 1992). They also demonstrate the important role that HarassMap staff and volunteers play as intermediaries between global and local spheres.

A workshop session at the Fall 2013 HMA, called “Sexual Harassment: Information and Statistics,” offers a good example of how HarassMap reframes sexual harassment in ways that simultaneously draw on normative practices and beliefs in Egypt, as well as transnational rights regimes that center of violence against women. The session opened with physical performances of the below two scenarios:

*Scenario 1:* Two women are walking together in the street. A thief walks by, grabs a purse from one of the women, and then tries to run. The woman's companion and a passer-by both grab the

thief before he can get away and a fight ensues. The victim, her friend, and the passer-by drag the thief to the police station, where he is treated roughly by police officers. Everyone screams as they try to present their side of the story, while the thief is simultaneously shouting his innocence.

*Scenario 2:* A young woman is walking down the street when a young man purposefully bumps into her. He begins joking with her and tries to strike up a conversation. She responds fearfully when a female witness takes her arm and insists she move on. Yet, the young man won't leave her be, and a friend of his who appears out of nowhere urges him to go after her. The girl angrily demands that the young man leave her alone and that he be taken to the police station for harassing her. However, the female witness who initially urged her to move on also encourages her to let the situation go because the police will not help. The girl insists and she and the female witness force the harasser to the police station. While there, the police invite the young man to sit and tell his side of the story, and then demand to know from the woman what she wants them to do.

The goal of these performances was to enjoin trainees to 1) compare the social responses of bystanders and police in cases of thievery versus sexual harassment, even if the harassment was seemingly ambiguous, and 2) to consider how criminality is understood vis-à-vis personal property and the body. These scenarios emerged within a context where thievery has long stimulated a stringent social response, often inciting action from numerous individuals within neighborhoods to capture thieves, beat them, and turn them into the police. HarassMap members saw this in stark contrast to the social response of community members when a woman's body or personal space is violated. As opposed to the rapid mobilization that street theft garners, the HMA workshop highlighted how sexual harassment was frequently met with bystander silence or apathy, attempts to convince the victim of sexual harassment to let it go (at best), or angry responses from police who did not feel sexual harassment to be worth their time. Quite often, as was visible in the quote that opened this chapter, women claiming to have been sexually harassed are dismissed as unrespectable or are viewed as the cause of the sexual harassment. In the workshop discussion that followed these performances, HarassMap attempted to reframe trainee thinking to see sexual harassment not just as a problem, but to associate it with the criminality abhorred in theft, thus making sexual harassment a

criminal act that resulted from the inappropriate actions of harassers, regardless of perceived stimuli. Promoting the criminalization of sexual harassment aligns with efforts of women's advocacy NGOs at the national level to redefine laws and penalties around gender violence. It also serves as a grassroots instantiation of what many scholars refer to as the domestic socialization of human rights norms. Here, domestic socialization refers to a process where norm mediators (NGOs) facilitate state adherence to international conventions through the creation of new (and ever improving) laws prohibiting violence against women (Merry 2006a; Starchursky 2013). Starchursky (2013) argues for the need to expand this understanding of socialization to include the work of changing perceptions around the law at the grassroots level, which will be further discussed later in this chapter.

In addition to weaving together local and global ethics, HMA workshops further underscore how HarassMap members challenge the factual bases of local beliefs and norms, often drawing on scientifically derived data made available by other NGOs or Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs). Similarly, HMA utilizes feminist rhetoric in more direct attempts to unseat entrenched patriarchal norms. In the same workshop above, the discussion of the two performances was followed by a talk on the statistical evidence around various aspects of sexual harassment in Egypt. Here, the 2013 UN Women study served as an important reference point, which reported that 99.3 percent of female respondents had experienced sexual harassment (El-Deeb 2013). As part of this, HarassMap staff that facilitated the workshop additionally countered what they believed to be prevalent stereotypes around sexual harassment, many of which were also raised by the trainee captains in the session. This included emphasizing that the way women

dressed in public was not a factor in why they might be sexually harassed, as the UN Women study indicated 69 percent of respondents did not believe clothing had any impact on who was sexually harassed. Minimally, they argued, the near universal numbers of women indicating they had been harassed in the survey pointed toward the problem itself being universally suffered by women regardless of their form of dress. Additionally, they countered popular notions that the economic situation and delayed marriage were factors underlying the existence of sexual harassment by noting that 39 percent of harassers identified in the UN Women study were young boys not at marriageable ages (and therefore, somehow, also not sexually motivated or repressed).

In another session, titled “The Gender Box: Violence Against Women,” offered both in Fall 2013 and Spring 2014, HMA staff encouraged trainees to confront the gendered roles assigned to both men and women, as well as the violence each faced for failing to adhere to these roles. Within this workshop, men and women were asked to list all of the behaviors that either made a woman “respectable” (*mu’adaba*) or that made a man masculine or manly (*ragil* – here the imperative, *istargil*, was used, asking the men to identify incidences that led to them being told to “man-up”). In 2013, this session exposed a vital tension between global and local ethics when it became heated around around the issue of religion, with trainees disagreeing vehemently about the way in which Islam either provided the grounds upon which women were oppressed or proved liberating to women, conferring upon them rights that were largely abused by contemporary society. In 2014, the session offered another order of theory regarding the heteronormative (*al-mi’yariyya al-ghayariyya*) patriarchal system that privileged the heterosexual binary pair (*nizam al-sinna’iy*), and where the control of women’s sexuality

was critical in maintaining the social order. Both sessions ended, as intended, with trainees arriving at an agreement that the violence faced by women was often more physical and shaming than that faced by men.

In order to engage with, counter, and reframe local sentiments around sexual harassment, HarassMap further drew on the widely examined phenomenon of the bystander effect, first noted by social psychologists following the infamous Kitty Genovese case in the United States in the 1960s, discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 (Latane & Darley 1968; Manning et al. 2007). In a session offered at the Fall 2013 HMA, entitled “Negotiation Skills and Management,” HMA members covered some of the most prevalent bystander responses that outreach teams would be expected to manage in the street, including 1) denial (*al-inkar*), where bystanders would refuse to believe in the existence of sexual harassment; 2) minimization (*al-tadniyya*), where bystanders would downplay the seriousness of sexual harassment, often stating that men and boys were just playing (*byhazar*); 3) blaming the victim (*lawm al-dahiyya*), where bystanders would argue a girl was asking to be sexually harassed, was not respectable, and that it was her clothing that incited the sexual harassment; 4) comparing the suffering of boys (*muqarna al m‘anat*), where bystanders would argue that boys were suffering due to the late age of marriage and they do not have a proper outlet or release for their tension; 5) reinforcing the status quo (*t‘aziz al-wad‘a al-rahaan*); where bystanders would argue sexual harassment did not exist in their neighborhood but might indicate where else it might be found, and that they often sidelined conversations by moving into other issues around gender and religion; 6) silence (*al-sawmt*), where bystanders simply would not engage in the conversation, and 7) justification (*al-tabreer*), where bystanders would argue that

certain sexually harassing behaviors were okay and that men should not be punished for committing them. The Community Outreach training manual offered examples of counter-responses to help trainees and volunteers combat these bystander techniques of avoiding direct engagement with the issue, as well as to contest the inherent gendered stereotypes visible in bystander statements.

These HMA workshops demonstrate how HarassMap staff and volunteers serve as important mediators and translators of norms and values circulating into and within Egyptian society. HarassMap members are agents in a liminal, or interstructural, process of change that simultaneously engages with local values, transnational women's rights, feminist rhetorics, and scholarly theory on bystander behavior in order to directly challenge local perceptions and behaviors, or to fuse together local and global values to construct new conceptions of sexual harassment (Turner 1987). In a conversation with HarassMap's former Marketing and Communications Director, she argued that even if changing people's ideas and perceptions was hard and slow work, because it required changes in so many other areas of life. But if HarassMap could, minimally, change people's everyday behaviors and get them to intervene against sexual harassment (because, somehow, it was the "cool" thing to do), then this could in turn lead to a shift in perceptions. Accordingly, a shift in the behaviors and perceptions of enough people at the societal level would, in theory, generate a critical mass of individuals speaking up against sexual harassment. A tipping point of bystanders, in turn, would force more equitable political and legal change. Political and legal change, however, was not the ultimate goal for HarassMap activists, for whom the politico-legal dimension was only one aspect of the wider societal change that they sought.

Nonetheless, this chapter contends that the work of entities such as HarassMap, which employ wide numbers of volunteers and engage in street-level, community-based outreach to change perceptions, behaviors and, ultimately, social practice overall, is inherently a political act. Dovetailing with critiques of the depoliticizing nature of anti-sexual harassment activism focused on community-based efforts that do not directly challenge the state as harasser and that do not focus on structural gender inequality discussed previously, this chapter underscores that the philosophical approach of HarassMap, in the final analysis, seeks to generate mass support that will foment change in social, economic and political realms. Yet, it is also argued that this change results from a bottom-up process of reframing the nature of social responsibility that HarassMap activists believe will ensure widespread and sustainable social acceptance of new norms around ideas that sexual harassment is an expression of gendered power that hinders women's freedom and is a crime. Moreover, this chapter argues that this bottom-up, grassroots effort at social and political change is occurring within a field of overlapping and interacting global and local forces, what Pratt (1992) called a contact zone. This contact zone is comprised of the spaces of engagement, as well as the varying entities that engage in defining new and contested meanings around sexual harassment. These include civil society and grassroots organizations, the wider public that comes into contact with these entities, public and private institutions (such as universities, corporations, and small businesses that develop anti-sexual harassment policies), state agencies, international development donors, transnational anti-sexual harassment/gender violence organizations, and even international and Arabic media that reports on sexual harassment in Egypt. Within this contact zone, HarassMap, and other similar initiatives, actively mediate

between many of these forces to reconceptualize sexual harassment in ways that encourage an end to its social acceptability and greater social responsibility among community members, and the production of greater freedoms for women in public space.

The next sections of this chapter situate anti-sexual harassment activism within the larger transnational field of women's rights advocacy that focuses on violence against women. I first highlight how transnational gender violence activism has been largely attuned to promoting legal changes, which is also evident in Egypt. Then I discuss the theoretical underpinnings of mediating international norms, the role of Egyptian civil society within transnational space, and how Egyptian civil society entities serve as important translators and mediators of new and shifting norms. Finally, I compare the role of street politics and community mobilization with more formal advocacy channels that have dominated in Egyptian civil society approaches, which sets the framework for further analysis of the role of anti-sexual harassment grassroots movements in promoting social change at the community level.

### **Transnationalism, Women's Rights and Violence Against Women**

Women's rights have been a feature of international governance spheres since the end of the Second World War. Shortly after its founding in 1946, the United Nations formed the Commission on Human Rights (HRC), as well as a sub-commission of the HRC that eventually became its own entity, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The goals of the CSW were to advocate for the creation of new international legal standards designed to ensure women's greater equality in the world and to provide a central forum for women around the world to work together and coordinate efforts



(Quataert 2011). However, the CSW and women's issues were initially peripheral to larger international human rights agendas and were not well integrated with UN goals overall. Human rights advocates during the Cold War period debated the universality, or naturalness, of rights, as outlined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and worked to define varying categories of rights, such as civil/political rights, social/economic/cultural rights, and collective rights (Cmiel 2004; Merry 2009). Through the creation of various conventions and declarations in these years, Merry highlights the significance of the way in which human rights regimes created a "system of quasi-law" that, while not necessarily enforceable, could be integrated into national systems (2009: 82-83). Women's rights were subsumed within this process and did not materialize as a major field of political and legal advocacy and research until much later in the 1970s. Gender violence, as a distinct transnational platform around which women's rights advocates rallied, arose later, fueled in part by growing feminist attentions on rape and domestic abuse through the later part of the 1970s and 1980s.

By 1979, the CSW drafted what would become one of the most significant international conventions for global and local women's advocacy groups, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Comprised of 30 articles, the convention laid out a framework for defining discrimination against women, enjoining states to promote more equitable social, economic and political conditions for women, and developing a structure for states to administer the convention and report on progress (Brandt & Kaplan 1995-1996). As of 2011, 188 states parties had ratified the convention, though many with reservations or objections, which underscored inherent tensions around the creation of a standard of universal rights that did not

accommodate differences in cultural beliefs. Brandt and Kaplan (1995-1996) noted that many reservations by more than 100 states members were based on tensions with religious doctrine, highlighting a larger impasse between (secular) universal rights and culture (Donnelly 2007; Merry 2009). Despite state reservations, or more importantly because of them, and because of the lack of state enforcement of international protocols, the establishment of CEDAW generated increased political and legal advocacy among women's organizations worldwide and provided a common framework for promoting women's equality and human rights.

The beginnings of transnational women's rights advocacy, underpinned by the force of CEDAW, coincided with the emergence of second wave feminism in the West and the growing grassroots women's movements in the developing world that were all documenting and generating new knowledge on the scale of gender inequities and discrimination, particularly around acts of sexual violence, such as rape and domestic abuse (Quataert 2011). A number of international events occurred that helped to facilitate the expanding transnational focus on women's rights and sexual violence, including the designation of 1975 as International Women's Year by the UN at the behest of the CSW in response to the growing call for gender reform, and the designation of March 8 as International Women's Day to commemorate the long (Soviet-inspired) history of working women's struggles (Kaplan 1985). Between 1975-1985, the UN held several world conferences on women in Mexico City, Copenhagen and Nairobi that placed additional attention on women's rights issues (Tungohan 2010). This was designated the Decade for Women, and resulted in increased emphasis on the need for a unified, global perspective and an integrated transnational feminist network focused on women's rights

unhindered by cultural difference, as well as the creation of a number of platforms designed to further expand the scope of women's advocacy (Tinker and Jacquette 1987). The Copenhagen Program for Action and the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies identified specific areas for continued reform, including the reduction of gender violence, and infused a gender focus in all areas of sociality, economy and politics (Merry 2009; Tripp 2006).

Heightened attention to combatting gender violence emerged through a series of events in the early 1990's. In 1990 the CSW submitted a resolution that was adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC), describing gender violence as a form of gender-based inequality (Merry 2009). A UN CEDAW monitoring committee subsequently generated a recommendation that defined gender violence as a form of discrimination, something not originally specified in CEDAW itself. "The 1992 statement placed violence against women squarely within the rubric of human rights and fundamental freedoms and made clear that states are obliged to eliminate violence perpetrated by public authorities and private persons" (Merry 2009: 78-79). At the 1993 UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, women's rights as a fundamental feature of human rights was expressly stipulated in the Vienna Declaration. This recognition was the result of a great deal of local and global advocacy by women's groups from across the world, who argued that human rights doctrines only represented half of humanity (Friedman 1994: 22). The Vienna conference signaled a turning point in gendering the global human rights agenda, but it was the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, from which the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was produced, that brought gender violence and sexual rights firmly into international

governance spheres and became a frame around which women's rights activists worldwide rallied (Bunch & Friend 1996; Friedman 2003; Stamatopoulou 1994).

These world conferences helped to turn gender-based violence into a powerful trope around which the work of countless women's organizations worldwide has revolved. Yet, such work has not come without problems and criticisms. Chief among these are concerns that secular women's rights doctrines do not represent important values and precepts derived from religion. This concern is part of a larger cultural critique of human rights, where human rights are seen to represent the inequitable development situation and Western hegemony over the rest of the world, and where culture and religion are seen as under threat from Western inspired secular ethics (Mayer 1994; Raday 2003). Relativist arguments arose to counter the naturalization of secular-based rights espoused in international conventions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to Brandt and Kaplan, though, relativism and the problem of culture are not acceptable grounds upon which to deny women equal rights with men, and that CEDAW "...encourages State Parties to modify cultural norms and to eliminate practices that hinder women's right to equality" (1995-6: 109). Advocates of human rights agree that universal human rights supersede cultural practice. However, Donnelly (2007) argued that there is no real impasse between universality and cultural practice, where human rights can be grounded in moral/religious doctrine, and that relativist arguments assume that cultural systems are coherently understood by cultural members and are bounded when they are, in fact, constantly fluctuating systems of meaning.

Related to this problem of culture is the academic critique of international women's rights as a hegemonic trope, which promotes a particular feminist perspective

on what constitutes equality for women. According to this critique, women's rights tied to international human rights agendas normalizes a particular feminist discourse underpinned by elite, secular, and Western(ized), livelihoods. Critics argue that differences between women's issues and experiences across class and culture have been downplayed or dismissed, and oppositional female voices are not counted in international discourses. In particular, Hasso (2009) questioned the governmentalization of women's rights and the creation of a transnational sphere within which national and international NGOs or non-profits imagines alliances between women from disparate locations. Grewal also argued that narratives of women's rights have become a "regime of truth" that are no longer simply concerned with the civil or political rights of women but are restructuring the moral fabric of modern society in particular ways (2003: 121). Here, a transnational feminist exceptionalism is visible. This is comparable to Puar's (2007) argument of Western exceptionalism, where white, heterosexual America constructed a new homonormative assemblage (or arrangement), positioned against a new terrorist assemblage, with the image of the fundamentalist, homophobic, and sexually repressed Muslim terrorist at its core. Puar argued that the US-led War on Terror was made possible, in part, via the intersection of these two assemblages. In a similar vein, transnational feminist exceptionalism constructs a particular assemblage of womanhood that is inhered with neoliberal, secular, Western, elite values.

Other concerns around women's advocacy center on institutionalized patriarchy. Zinsser (2003) argued that, throughout the Decade for Women, the contradictions between development practices, national priorities disadvantaging women, and international doctrines promoting their equality, as well as the slow and uneven pace of

actual change on the ground in many places, resulted in women's rights activists questioning "...whether women could ever become defining participant of ideologies and the equals of men in structures predicated on their exclusion and disadvantage" (Zinsser 2003: 167). Yet, she noted with hopefulness that the activities of women's organizations worldwide were driving women's issues into the mainstream, bringing women together as a political force. Transnational networks offer activist women support structures at both the local and global levels as women come into contact with others advancing similar or complimentary agendas (Sharify-Funk 2008). Women's rights as human rights also provide activists with a common platform to combat discrimination and gendered violence and to more coherently raise awareness of the problems that women, as a class, face. Notwithstanding relativist arguments, such an approach counters the problem of dismissing certain forms of violence as uniquely cultural deficiencies. For instance, Narayan (1997) argued that dowry murders should not be viewed as singularly an Indian problem that required reconfigurations of Indian culture, but as an expression of domestic abuse in a locale that had no discourse on the abuse and battering of women. The boundary crossing aspect of transnational women's rights networks provide a shared framework and forum within which activist women are able to speak about issues and to tap into resources that might not otherwise be available to them, allowing them to work toward consensus-building and advocacy at multiple levels.

### *Transnational Women's Activism in Egypt*

Within the framework of transnational activism, Egyptian women have long been engaged in promoting women's equal rights, in both public and private. Even prior to

geopolitical shifts following the Second World War, Egyptian women were organizing and seeking to redefine their roles in both politics and society. Many scholars have explored the early decades of women's advocacy at the turn of the twentieth century, noting how the image of woman and women's public role was initially tied to the nationalist project and constructing Egypt's identity as an independent and modern nation-state. In this period, the voices of male scholars and nationalists helped to delimit the scope of new discourses around women's rights. A paradigmatic shift ensued among some religious scholars who saw the need for continued interpretations (*ijtihad*) of the religious texts to maintain Islam's relevancy in the modern world, and the woman question served as an important facet (Badran 1996; Baron 1994; Pollard 2005). These individuals, referred to as Islamic modernists, along with their secular counterparts, were actively involved in reshaping notions of womanhood in Egypt. Among the changes that prominent figures, such as Murqus Fahmy, Muhammed Abduh, and Qasim Amin, advocated for in various ways was reform in laws governing marriage, polygamy and divorce, and changes in cultural practice around women's seclusion and veiling practices, which Amin felt had no basis in Islam. Interestingly, Murqus, in his 1894 play *al-Mar'ah fi al-Sharq* (The Women in the East), connected seclusion and the control of women's bodies to an underlying need to control paternity, since women were believed to be prone to sexual infidelity (Badran 1996:17).

Women were also a critical part of challenging women's domesticity and redefining their role in the public, and they included such seminal female figures as Hoda el-Shaarawi, Nabawiya Musa, Zaynab al-Ghazali, and Doria Shafiq, to name but a few. Events during the years of the First World War, including the rape of Egyptian women by

British soldiers and the growth of prostitution, helped to link notions of women's honor with that of the nation, where threats to women were viewed as a collective threat to the nation. Women activists sought to address such issues, but they were silent on the underlying patriarchal basis of connecting women's bodies to national honor. "Women nationalists used family metaphors, attacked prostitution, and discussed national honor, but they shied away from notions of national honor grounded in female sexuality and connected to their bodies" (Baron 2005: 54). However, following Egypt's formal independence from British rule in the early 1920's, it became clear to women activists that claims to full citizenship in Egyptian society were still being challenged through the denial of the right to vote (Badran 1996).

The internationalization of women's activism at this time initially centered around suffrage, where Egyptian women sought alliances with transnational women's organizations, such as the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship (IAW), which was comprised of women's groups from the West and East, for support in promoting expanded notions of women's citizenship. Yet, such alliances were frustrated by the lack of sensitivity by Western women's organizations, which dominated the IAW, in understanding how the history of imperialism impacted women's options and the course of change in the (former) colonies. However, Badran (1996) notes that Arab women activists did not articulate any distinct challenges against colonialism, despite being linked to nationalist movements at home, which did not help to assuage tensions between Western and non-Western women's groups. By the start of the Second World War, international activism on women's suffrage was fracturing, in particular due to tensions between Jewish and Arab women's organizations around the looming Israeli-



Palestinian conflict. Intra-Arab differences between women also manifested themselves given country-specific histories of colonialism and religious particularities, most especially around public (un)veiling. In Egypt, the most iconic event in the history of the women's movement was Hoda Shaarawi's public removal of her *niqab* (face veil) at a Cairo train station upon returning from an IAW congress in Europe. This signaled a shift in Egyptian women's engagement with the public space, as well as the system of gender within which veiling was embedded. Despite their differences, though, Arab women across the region, led by Egyptian activists such as Hoda el-Shaarawi, were actively engaged in defining what Badran (1996) calls a pan-Arab feminism, focused on Arab women's political and economic rights, education, and the question of Palestine. This would be challenged across the region in the post-WWII period.

Following the full removal of British forces from Egypt in 1956 and the advent of the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser, women's independent activism and any possibility for international collaborations were abruptly curtailed. Under Law 32 of 1964, all associations came under rigid government controls as the state moved into a period of nationalization and corporatization. Women's rights entered a new state-sponsored phase, however, as "[t]he new Nasserite welfare state offered women an explicit commitment to public equality of the sexes...During these years of 'state feminism' many Egyptian women were mobilized, both in terms of their political participation and their economic productivity" (Blaydes and El-Tarouty 2009: 367; Al-Ali 2000; Hatem 1992). Hatem argued that the "state feminism" of the Nasserite and the succeeding Sadatist periods promoted a patriarchal paternalism that imagined women as children in need of protection and assistance (1994: 664). The absence of women's independent organizing

left them subject to the whims of the state as it devised and implemented national gender policies. According to Abu Lughod, the *infitah*, or the open door liberal economic policy which went into effect in the later years of Sadat's regime and which paved the way for greater Western interventions in the country through the 1980s and 1990s, led to reform structures that later truncated the state's roll in advocating women's rights (2010: 3). The Mubarak regime that took over in the 1980s was left with a legacy of state-sponsored gender reforms, many of which were highly unpopular among Islamic organizations. The state readily back-pedaled on women's issues when they conflicted with other strategic interests, especially where it concerned negotiating with Islamic opposition groups. As the state retreated from supporting women's issues, Islamic opposition parties and organizations at the same time began to operate more publically, taking on women's issues alongside their secular counterparts.

During the Mubarak era, and the concomitant turn toward liberalization, a "growth industry" of civil society organizations engaged in development and human rights work (Abu Lughod 2010). This growth industry of NGOs in Egypt mirrored the growth of NGOs world wide, tied to the changing development strategies of international donors and, with respect to promoting human and women's rights, the numerous world conferences that were held throughout these decades. In 1994, the UN International Conference on Population Development (ICPD) was held in Cairo, where NGOs, including Egyptian organizations, served in the preparatory process (Al-Ali 2000; Starchursky 2013). An NGO forum was concomitantly held alongside the conference, which resulted in "...the possibility for many NGOs with different backgrounds to get to know each other, exchange ideas, discuss forms of cooperation, and make their demands

known to the wider public” (Starchursky 2013: 88). Moreover, NGO involvement in the preliminary stages gave women’s groups the ability to discuss issues around women’s political participation, gender violence and sexual rights (Al-Ali 2002). While the Cairo conference was not focused on women’s issues, participating women’s groups organized a campaign that firmly situated gender violence as a human rights violation (Bunch et al. 1996). Gender violence research and activism in Egypt concomitantly arose within the context of these conferences and global efforts to make the ending of women’s suffering part of the international human rights agenda.

Female genital mutilation/circumcision (FGM/C), while a longstanding practice in Egypt, which many argue began early in the Pharaonic period and which the British colonial government attempted (unsuccessfully) to criminalize, became a widely recognized problem by international organizations in the late 1970’s when the UN Health Organization held the first international conference on the problem in Sudan (Ortiz 2010; Toubia & Sharief 2003). Research and advocacy, focused primarily on documenting the scale of the problem and its’ adverse health effects, persisted throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, it was the release of a CNN documentary showing a young Egyptian girl being circumcised just before the 1994 ICPD conference that placed FGM squarely within the framework of violence against women and spurred Egyptian women’s organizations to form the Taskforce Against Female Genital Mutilation (Nelson 1996). Similarly, domestic abuse became a problem that Egyptian women’s organizations researched and lobbied against in the lead up to the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (Ammar 2000). At the Beijing Conference gender violence was not

only highlighted as a serious problem in Egypt but also became an active trope that women's rights activism began to revolve around.

Such events, along with the proliferation of NGOs worldwide, were part and parcel of what Abu Lughod (2010; 2013) and Hasso (2009) have argued to be the governmentalization of rights. Women's rights, absorbed into international governance structures, were accompanied by the creation and professionalization of a new elite class of activists mediating international norms in local settings, and speaking on behalf of all women. With the growing participation of Egyptian NGOs in governance, the Egyptian state saw a need to develop its own official entity to handle women's issues and to regulate the scope of NGO activities. The National Council for Women (NCW) was created following the Beijing conference. Moreover, the state amended the Nasserite law of associations (Law 32), which went through two iterations between 1997-2002 but continued to allow for state discretionary power over NGOs (Starchursky 2013).

From this period on, civil society organizations in Egypt have been dynamically engaged with international organizations and transnational networks to draw support, in the form of funding, technical expertise, capacity building, and developing new norms and frames in which to facilitate change around women's rights. Yet the socio-political field within which this work has been carried out limits the scope of influence of these organizations.

### **Mediating International Human and Women's Rights**

One important area of scholarly inquiry around human and women's rights is understanding the processes by which international conventions and protocols are

articulated with local systems of meaning, often referred to by scholars of international relations as the domestic socialization of human rights norms (Risse 1999; Risse & Sikkink 1999). Here, the concept of norms mirrors that of culture. They are a conceptually fuzzy reference to ways of understanding and standards of behavior that draw on, and/or convey, a sense of shared tradition that feeds (and are fed by) varying identities. They are also contentious, unevenly experienced and performed by cultural actors, lack homogeneity, and are constantly shifting (Finnemore 1996; Merry 2006a). There are two facets of concern with respect to the socialization of human and women's rights norms, 1) how states are enjoined to adhere to these conventions and to codify them into legislation and legal codes, and 2) how the population within a state engages with the ethics and spirit contained in these conventions to, somehow, incorporate them within a locally historic set of cultural beliefs and practices. The first has received a great deal of attention by those seeking to map the diffusion of international human rights norms and to understand the way in which state institutional structures are refashioned and brought into compliance with international standards, what Starchursky references as the "high politics" of vertical change (2013: 5, citing Smith et al. 1997: 70). Cultural change at the ground level on human rights, on the other hand, is less straightforward. Such change involves reshaping the consciousness, attitudes and behaviors of the wider public, or the "deep politics" of horizontal change (Starchursky 2013: 5, citing Uvin 2000: 23). Both are viewed as critical for the success of the socialization process and the sustainable adoption, internalization and embodiment of universal standards of rights. Yet, it is the first - how states are made to comply with international conventions to

promote more a more equitable environment for all - that often receives a greater share of activist and scholarly attention.

In theoretical conceptualizations, processes of norm socialization are mediated primarily by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In large part, this is connected to the turn in development practice over the last several decades that privileged NGOs in terms of funding and implementing development-based project work given their perceived connection to the grassroots (Fisher 1997; Murdock 2003). Defined as “private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development,” NGOs emerged as important players in governance and development spheres because, originating from within local communities, they are believed to be more concerned with the interests of the community and to be independent of state institutions (World Bank 2002: 1). Additionally, NGOs are commonly viewed as essential features of a healthy civil society and in facilitating democratization, particularly in locales with corrupt regimes (Edwards and Hulme 1997). NGOs assume the label of broker, translator, mediator, and norm entrepreneur, occupying intermediate space between the global and the local, between inter-governmental organizations (IGOs)/international development agencies and state/local communities (Lewis and Mosse 2006; Merry 2006b). NGO workers negotiate with international entities in ways that are not possible for all members of a community and they seek to influence their fellow community members to see the world in new ways, inspired by external discourses that might seemingly be incompatible with local ways of life. Yet, this does not occur without tension, and as Merry (2006b) notes, those who translate or mediate exist within an

unequal structure of power. “Translators are both powerful and vulnerable. They work in a field of conflict and contradiction, able to manipulate others who have less knowledge than they do but still subject to exploitation by those who installed them” (Merry 2006b: 40).

An extensive literature exists on norms, whether international or domestic, and the process of norm socialization, which variously involves brokerage and mediation, entrepreneurial skills, and translating. It should first be noted that while norms, like culture, have been vaguely or generally seen as a standard of behavior, they differ from culture in one important way. While there is no clear consensus on what constitutes culture, theorizing posits culture to be an overall “system” that has varying aspects to it, i.e., adaptive, cognitive, structural, symbolic (Keesing 1974). This system crosscuts the spaces people live in, the way they mediate their environment, communicate with each other, and sense, experience, or imagine the world around them. Interactions in these systems are a complex series of signs, symbols and performances of actors situated in particular times and places. Accordingly, there can be no truth about the world, only the differential perspectives of actors who mediate it. Norms may be seen as a feature within these cultural systems, as specific codes that guide certain behaviors in certain contexts. In this vein, scholars of norm dynamics posit two different types of norms: regulative, or constitutive, norms that direct behavior in particular ways, and evaluative, or prescriptive, norms, which have received less attention but have been defined as “appropriate” or “proper” norms or rules (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 891). Finnemore and Sikkink note, “norm-breaking behavior...generates disapproval or stigma...” while “...norm confirming behavior...produces praise, or...is so taken for granted that it provides no

reaction whatsoever” (1998: 892). Norms are shared within communities at varying scales, whether local, regional or international, and they shift based on the actions of actors that interact and move across these communities of scale.

Scholars of human rights and international relations are frequently concerned with top-down flows, or the trickling down, of international norms to local places, which is referred to as norm diffusion (Zwingel 2012). Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) proposed a three-stage process of norm diffusion. This begins with norm emergence, or norm building, where norm entrepreneurs, or “meaning architects,” identify particular problematics and promote a new vision of appropriate behavior to, somehow, mitigate or alleviate the problem (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 897, citing Lessig 1995). Promoting new norms takes place within differing cultural systems of already established rules, codes, and meanings around appropriate behavior. In order for new norms to take hold, the authors argue that there must be some platform on which to promote the new norm and these norms must be accepted as legitimate by states and incorporated into the institutional fabric of differing societies. Once norm entrepreneurs are able to build a critical mass of states behind the new norm, this propels them into the second stage of the diffusion process, called norm cascades. Here, once a tipping point has been reached of states accepting the new norm, then other states follow. Socialization in this stage involves states adhering to new codes and rules largely in order to maintain their legitimacy and reputations within the larger international structure (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 902, citing Waltz 1979: 75-76). The final stage of the diffusion process, called internalization, occurs when the new norm becomes so ingrained in the way states operate that they are no longer contentious and become a matter-of-fact part of practice.



Notwithstanding the state-centric focus of this model, it provides a springboard for considering how non-state populations adopt new notions of rights. Indeed, Starchursky (2013) argues for the need to understand how domestic socialization takes place outside of institutional frameworks. Drawing on certain features of social movement theory, many scholars further elaborate on the way in which norm entrepreneurs, translators, and mediators engender support for new norms and new ways of behaving and perceiving the world at the ground level. The notion of “framing” gained widespread attention for helping to explain how social movement actors portray problems and issues to achieve a certain outcome in their activism. Framing has been defined as “‘schemata of interpretation’ that enable individuals to ‘locate, perceive, identify, and label’ occurrences within their life space and the world at large” (Snow et al. 1986). Frames are not so much a norm, but how a new norm is discursively constructed and promoted to achieve certain ends. In their analysis of how social movements facilitate cultural change, Snow et al. (2013) outline two critical facets of the framing process, articulation and elaboration. Frame articulation involves the construction of the frame itself. This includes bringing together all of the discursive elements of the frame in question, which “involves the connection, or splicing together, and coordination of issues, events, experiences, and cultural items...so that they hang together in a relatively integrated and meaningful fashion” (Snow et al. 2013: 229). Frame elaboration involves differentially emphasizing different aspects of the frame as it evolves. The purpose of these processes is to build resonance or salience around the framing of new norms, which facilitates their acceptance among the population.

Resonance is a central concept in the acceptance of new norms at the local level. It assumes that norm entrepreneurs are translating or framing new norms in ways that tap into local values or practices in order to lessen the shock of change. The idea of localization emerged to explain how external norms might be adjusted to link with local practices, just as local norms may also be adjusted to accommodate the external norm (Acharya 2004). However, resonance has been contested by scholars who note that resonant frames may not address the inherent biases inherent in local norms and that social movements often employ frames and espouse norms that are oppositional in nature, i.e. that more directly challenge power imbalances (Feree 2003). Radical ideas or frames may actually facilitate much deeper structural changes than resonant frames. Yet, resonance and radicalism are not inimical processes. Both are selectively employed by norm mediators in shifting fashion to build support around new norms. Levitt and Merry (2009) posited a process they call vernacularization, which involves more active mediation between overlapping groups of individuals talking to each other. Norm mediators here are not simply or throwing together discursively disparate ideas to construct a new norm. Instead, these actors are involved in speaking vertically and horizontally, and they convey sentiments in a circuitous flow between multiple levels. The implication is that local communities are dynamically involved in the way that norm mediators construct frames and norms. This process consists of conflict and tension as these norm mediators strive to convey new notions of human and women's rights in ways that do not reproduce the inequality they are seeking to eliminate.

## **Egyptian Civil Society and the Politics of Mediating Rights**

Mediating international human and women's rights is challenging for NGOs and other independent initiatives in Egypt's militarized and corporatized climate.

Intermittently since independence and continuously since 1981, Egypt has been under a state of emergency, purportedly in the interest of the country's national security, but which has allowed the military to solidify its power as the ruling faction (Brownlee 2002; Reza 2007). Within this militarized context, opposition, particularly that from Islamic organizations but also from within secular liberal spheres, is severely restricted, though not extinguished. Scholars note several important features of the nature of state-civil society relations in Egypt. The first is that the state vacillates between differing strategies that are both inclusionary and exclusionary with respect to oppositional forces.

Uncompromising repression is one such measure, which is witnessed in the shutting down of organizations, censoring of opposition publications, elections tampering, and imprisonment, torture, and murder to silence opposition figures and activists. Here, it is posited that repressive measures, in fact, generate more violent and militant opposition counter-responses (Anderson 1997). The Egyptian state further engages in a tactic of integrated dissent, where a certain degree of opposition and even a limited pluralism in the form of political parties is tolerated, in order to forestall more significant incursions into the political process by opposition members (Albrecht 2005). Co-optation is part of this integrated dissent, where entities become embroiled, in one way or another, in serving the interest of the state, even while they seemingly engage in challenging state policies and practices. Bianchi (1989) labeled this form of integrated dissent corporatism, whereby the Egyptian state engages with, takes over, or heavily monitors any

organization or entity that could stimulate widespread popular resistance to state practices and undermine state legitimacy, which extends over professional syndicates, political parties, and civil society organizations.

Within this corporatist framework, the legal environment demonstrates the extent of government co-optation over civil society. Under Law 32 of 1964, all forms of associations, including NGOs, came under the strict regulation of the state. Comprised of 140 articles, the law stipulates the conditions within which associations may form, their structure and governance, their relations with other associations, and their funding process. For instance, the law prohibited NGOs from engaging in work viewed as unnecessary by the community and duplicating work already under the purview of another organization (Abdelrahman 2004). Yet, Abdelrahman argued the notion of what comprises necessary or unnecessary work is sufficiently vague that the state has significant authority to reject applications for licensing. Moreover, the law gives the state the right to reject licensing for those entities that prove a threat to the security of the country, with no guidelines as to what constituted a threat to national security. Other provisions of the law include the right of the state to dissolve any association, approve or appoint members to its board (including state officials), and to approve funding from external (international) sources (Abdelrahman 2004: 130-135). As NGO activism came into full swing within the context of liberalization, expanding transnational movements and the world conferences on human and women's rights, as well as the development drive to fund project work through NGOs, Egyptian activists increasingly called for amendments to Law 32 (Fouad et al. 2005; Starchursy 2013). In 1999, consequent state concerns about the growing influence of NGOs in the international arena, and the

potential ramifications of that within the local setting, resulted in an even more stringent version of the law generated without consultation of civil society entities: Law 153. It was quickly overturned by the Constitutional Court for not proceeding through proper channels of approval within the Parliament, yet was re-established in 2002 under Law 84. The new version of the law maintains the provisions of Law 32, but also specifically establishes that NGOs are to be excluded from political activity, thus putting most, if not all, advocacy NGOs at high risk of being targeted by the state. Abdelrahman argued that this law went as far as to nationalize civil society in Egypt and that so long as NGOs avoid political work – more specifically, direct challenges to state legitimacy - the state would give them a pass (2004: 132-136; Pratt 2005).

Top-down restrictions are only one factor complicating the ability of NGOs in Egyptian civil society to mediate the socialization of human and women's rights norms and to create a more broad based movement to combat gender violence. Despite the growth industry of NGOs in the last several decades, the existence of a true civil society in Egypt is contested and argued to be weak, not only due to overarching controls from the state, but also because of the perceived lack of an ethic of tolerance, acceptance, and collaboration between differing civil society groups (Al-Sayyid 1993; Ibrahim 1996). A perceived absence of civility and a high degree of intolerance marks relations between these groups, particularly between Islamic and secular organizations. Moreover, increasing professionalization in the NGO field and the competition for funds creates a general atmosphere of mistrust and infighting among organizations (Al-Ali 2000 and 2002; Abdelrahman 2002 and 2004). The lack of political space afforded to NGOs results in internal conflicts and a lack of mutual acceptance. Individual activists are often unable

to dissent within this rigid NGO system, in part, due to fears around being marginalized and labeled a traitor (Starchursky 2013: 102; Abdelrahman 2002). In many ways, civil society reflects the practices of political society, where corporatist arrangements lead to divisiveness and competition where certain groups seek to repress others while attempting to generate popular support for their own agendas (Abdelrahman 2002).

Along with the presence of internal incivility, the elite nature and lack of internal democratic structure within Egyptian NGOs further impedes their ability to effectively mediate human and women's rights discourses and to facilitate change (Abdelrahman 2004; Langohr 1994). In her analysis of 60 NGOs in both Cairo and Upper Egypt, Abdelrahman (2004) noted the class bias among the leadership of almost all of these organizations. Board members consisted of members of influential families, former ministry officials, as well as individuals with high levels of education and professionalization in various fields, such as medicine and law. Her informants argued that having the qualifications and expertise necessary to undertake NGO project work were requisites both for project success and for building confidence among community members and beneficiaries (Abdelrahman 2004: 155). However, Abdelrahman raised concern that NGO elitism disconnected them from the issues and sensibilities of the popular classes, which they are often lauded for within development circles. Scholars widely note that the increased institutionalization and professionalization of NGOs and their staff often lead to a disjuncture between NGOs and the communities they serve, as elite language and seemingly Western-inspired discourses contribute to the potential alienation of community members from the NGOs providing services (Murdock 2010). Additionally, NGOs have been viewed as a vehicle for NGO leaders to become quasi-

authoritarian rulers, to (attempt to) ingratiate themselves within the political sphere, and to acquire and (mis)use funds for personal gain (Petras 1999; Spiro 1996-1997). Al-Sayyid Sa'id argued that NGOs serve as vehicles for political officials to mobilize the public toward the interest of the state (2005: 66). However, NGOs may similarly serve as vehicles for corrupt individuals not already involved in the political process to mobilize NGO resources in their own attempt to advance themselves into the political arena.

Political engagements on women's rights in Egypt, within the framework of state corporatism and the lack of NGO cooperation, manifest themselves in particular ways. A number of strategic approaches have developed that reflect activist considerations of where their work might have the most impact, given the limited space afforded to them by the state to challenge the status quo and their beliefs about the nature of social and political change. Common approaches included conducting research, writing reports, running awareness-raising events, such as seminars, conferences and workshops, as well as offering training sessions and legal clinics. "*Nadwat* (seminars/ workshops) and *mu'atamarat* (conferences) are among the most commonplace and visible activities of the Egyptian women's movement, a phenomenon which is sometimes used to discredit the women's movement as '*women who spend their time sitting and talking*'" (Al-Ali 2000: 171). Topical concerns include raising the legal consciousness of women around Personal Status laws, poverty reduction through assistance with access to services and running micro-credit type programs, and sexual violence programming focused on FGM/C and domestic abuse (Al-Ali 2000). As noted in previous chapters, there is also concern with increasing women's political participation in government and lobbying government officials to support changing discriminatory laws. Much of the work of these NGOs seeks

structural change in top-down fashion, though this is not to imply that NGOs do not work directly within communities to offer services and support, which has always been a component of the strategic approach for many NGOs. Underlying NGO strategies is an apparent conviction that to change the structure of discrimination against women involves changing legal and institutional processes, and pressuring the state to comply with and enforce international human and women rights standards. The need to encode human and women's rights within the overarching structure is of paramount importance. Consequently, political and legal changes, like stricter punishments for offenses against women, are seen as the kind of force needed to then shift widespread social practices.

Yet women's NGO advocacy work in Egypt occurs within a patriarchal institutional structure that already disadvantages and discriminates against women. A number of factors are unclear in this process, including whether the state is able to shift cultural beliefs or is simply a mirror of those beliefs, and the extent to which changes in the political and legal environment are able to reshape social perceptions among the populace. An account of a sexual harassment incident witnessed by the HarassMap Community Outreach Director, Hussein El-Shafei, serves as an important example of concerns that have arisen from independent initiatives since 2010 that have chosen to bypass lobbying for legal change as a means of facilitating societal change. According to El-Shafei, while traveling by microbus from Alexandria to Cairo, a woman vehemently accused a man sitting behind her of sexually harassing her. The microbus stopped while passengers attempted to calm the woman and urge her to let it go, asserting their desire to get home. The woman demanded the man be forced off but he loudly declared that he would not leave. When the bus took off with the man still as a passenger, the woman



made a phone call that passengers could hear where she insisted the police be waiting at their arrival point to arrest the man. At this point, the man shouted to be let off the bus, yelling that the woman “would send him to hell.” The passengers all agreed it would be better for him to run off into the desert than be arrested. To El-Shafei, aside from showing no concern for the woman, passengers did not see sexual harassment as a crime and definitely not something worth being arrested and prosecuted for. Despite already existing laws on “indecent assault,” and even recent attentions in the media on the growing problem of sexual harassment in Egypt, particularly given the assaults in Tahrir, HarassMap activists have argued that people do not see sexual harassment as problematic or as a punishment-worthy offense. More importantly, according to El-Shafei, “people don’t want to stop harassing, *they just don’t want to get caught*.” This story illustrates the wide gap between social and politico-legal ethics. The law itself may not be enough of a deterrent to circumvent discriminatory practices, and people would still find the creative means to engage in discriminatory behavior that would allow them to avoid getting caught.

### **The Street as the Site for Societal Change**

In the strategic repertoire of NGO approaches and activities, social change is facilitated through more direct forms of engagement with the political and legal machinery in Egypt. Embedded as they are in a larger global process that seeks state compliance with international standards of universal rights, Egyptian NGOs strive to create more an equitable rights based structure enshrined in political and legal practice. Part of the problem with the relationship between rights and the political sphere is the

inherent connection of rights-based claims to notions of liberalism, which underpin Western-inspired international conventions and standards. According to Schneider (1986), liberalism emerging from capitalistic frameworks is assembled around the opposition of self and other, individual and community. Rights that are part of this liberal scheme are, therefore, individualistic, owned by people, and “overemphasize the separation of the individual from the group, and thereby inhibits an individual’s awareness of her connection to and mutual dependence upon others” (Schneider 1986: 595). Moreover, Schneider highlights the critique that rights are reified, or fetishized, creating a social order around which people imagine a new sense of belonging and community. Yet, she goes on to say that this reification of rights tends to diminish the diversity inherent in social worlds, divides and disunites people from each other, and creates a dependency on state structures that confer upon people their rights. American feminist scholars prominent in anti-rape and anti-sexual harassment activism in the 1970’s and 1980’s also argued that legal frameworks are themselves patriarchal and that rights encoded in the law represent masculinized understandings of the world (Baker 2007; MacKinnon 1983). Some groups within the American women’s movement chose not to engage with the state and the law in shaping social change around sexual harassment. This is not to say the law is not helpful in projects that seek societal change. The question is the extent to which the law, which is embedded within already discriminatory and patriarchal institutions, can be refashioned or deployed to reshape wider social perceptions around new notions of women’s rights and gender violence.

For the independent initiatives that arose in Egypt in late 2010 and then in the post-Revolutionary period, direct political and legal engagement to facilitating change

was not a strategic method of choice. The question of whether political and legal change could effect wider social change was arguable to some activists and perhaps not a consideration reflected upon by others. However, the corporatist nature of advocacy and activist work in Egypt's corrupt political environment was widely evident, which left some activists looking for means to promote change without becoming embroiled in state machinations. Until 2014, many of these new initiatives, including HarassMap<sup>6</sup>, Ded el-Taharrush, Harakat Bassma, and others that arose and waned early, chose to work informally in the street, without registration, and by using a volunteer pool of community members that engaged in activism, often on a part time basis. This street-level work involves speaking directly to strangers, opening a dialogue, and engaging in debate, with the intent of seeking agreements from individuals that they will behave in new ways vis-à-vis sexual harassment; i.e., either they will stop sexually harassing or they will speak up if they witness sexual harassment. Such strategies do not eschew the uses of the law and law enforcement mechanisms in promoting change. For example, as already discussed in the previous chapter, Harakat Bassma openly coordinated with police forces when implementing street patrols. According to Bassma co-founder, Nihal Saad Zaghloul, the goal of this was to build a cooperative and not a combative relationship with the police,

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<sup>6</sup> While not formally registered, as previously mentioned HarassMap incubated with Nahdat al Mahrousa in 2012. In late 2013, they submitted their application for formal registration as both an NGO and a corporation. In this year, HarassMap split into two entities: HarassMap and Tadween. Tadween was comprised of HarassMap's research unit, which became a separate entity in its own right, with the goal of engaging in research on gender violence and monitoring and evaluating project work. In 2014, the government of El-Sisi began a project to update Law 84 of 2002 and gave all formal NGOs and informal initiatives in Egypt until November 2014 to submit their NGO registration applications. In prior years, NGOs creatively skirted the provisions of Law 84 by registering as corporations and were now being forced into new forms of compliance by the re-installed military regime. Similarly, the unregistered street initiatives were required to register in order to continue with volunteer-based operations. As of the research period for this project, Bassma tentatively indicated their interest in registering and Ded el-Taharrush was waiting for the application period to open to incubate with Nahdat el-Mahrousa.

such that their work would not be thwarted and the police might actually prove helpful in apprehending harassers or supporting victims. Similarly, Shoft Taharush is also closely connected with the police and the Ministry of Interior in monitoring new sexual harassment units. HarassMap openly encourages victims of sexual harassment to submit police reports in order to normalize the process of reporting so that, eventually, the police will not see such reports as nuisances and victims as unrespectable. Notwithstanding these examples, a number of reasons exist with respect to the choice these initiatives made to work in communities and not lobby for political and legal reforms.

In part, the post-Revolutionary period offered a unique opportunity to engage in volunteer-based community work directly in the streets that was not possible before. The fall of the Mubarak regime opened up a more dynamic environment within which activism and rights-based work could take place (ElSayed and Rizzo, unpublished manuscript). Certainly, the political vacuum also meant that the rigid controls on associations were temporarily interrupted, and thus gave new groups a window within which to engage in new forms of activism that had not previously been seen in Egypt, including work in the streets and via online platforms (Khamis 2011). Also, many activists express concerns that formalized engagement with the state will lead to co-optation and eventual ineffectiveness. Many of these organizations feel that volunteerism and community involvement in social change is, somehow, more effective because it derives from a spirit of wanting change. According to Nihal Saad Zaghloul, the family-like nature of informal work is appealing. This was echoed in the perspective of Ayman Nagy, the founder of Ded El-Taharrush, who stressed that Ded El-Taharrush activists interact with each other outside of their activist work and that developing a family-like

trust among members is critical to the success of community outreach. There was a sense of the inherently democratic nature of such work, where decisions were made collectively and hierarchies were minimized, with people occupying a few leadership positions simply to facilitate the completion of work. This stands in contrast to the more hierarchical structure of pre-Revolutionary NGOs, with entrenched leadership and a lack of internal democratic ethos. However, it must be stated that some entities arose with relatively narrow objectives, and without very well developed philosophies or approaches to street-level work. For instance, both Bassma and Ded el-Taharrush targeted all individuals, harassers, bystanders and victims, in their outreach, with the intent to open a dialogue. However, there was no underlying philosophy of cultural change guiding their approach to promoting change.

Organizations like HarassMap, on the other hand, developed a relatively philosophical program for mediating social change and encouraging respect for women's rights. HarassMap members felt that engendering sincere belief for women's rights at the ground level could not be done effectively from within the political or legal sphere. According to HarassMap co-founder and Executive Director Rebecca Chiao, the state itself had no motivation to change or to enforce change regarding the situation for women. This mirrored feminist arguments around the state's lack of commitment to and trivialization of women's rights (Bunch 1990 and 1995). HarassMap fundamentally differed from other NGOs in Egypt that were active in women's rights advocacy with respect to where they identified the locus of change. Instead of a top-down flow where new political and legal formulations would somehow infiltrate the structure of beliefs (or fears) among the populace, HarassMap activists envisioned a bottom-up flow of shifting

ideologies that would impact how people wanted to be governed. In recent years, scholars have explored such forms of bottom-up change, including Bayat (1997 and 2010), who posited the notion of “quiet encroachment,” which afforded more mobilizational power to the people. Social change started with the values and practices of the people themselves, of whom state officials were a part.

In this formulation, the people were the force necessary to instigate political and legal change. With enough people espousing new perspectives and behaving in new ways, political change would then follow to accommodate new widespread social realities. Having said this, it is important to note that this philosophical platform espoused by HarassMap developed within a context where a certain amount of political advocacy was already occurring and community-level work was not seen as sufficiently deep. HarassMap members did not argue that political advocacy in Egypt was a lost cause because of state oppression and that political and legal changes prior to social change on the ground were not possible. In fact, HarassMap actively cooperated with other civil society organizations and, somewhat hesitantly (and without uniform support internally from staff members), with state entities. However, they argued that society-wide changes started with the people themselves and not necessarily with political institutions.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter explored the global and local context within which anti-sexual harassment activism has been situated, along with how activists serve as intermediaries between these two contexts to mediate new norms of women’s rights and gender violence. While the notion of women’s rights was more generally part of international

human rights advocacy in the post-WWII period, it did not become a critical or active force until the Second Wave Women's Movement arose in the 1970s. In this period, women's organizations from around the world, though predominantly from Western countries, lobbied at the international level to mainstream gender concerns and to demand that gender and women's rights receive greater attention in international governance spheres. Through the 1970s – 1990s, various legal instruments, world conferences, and international platforms were devised and organized that were geared toward enforcing national compliance with international standards around women's human rights and ending gender violence. This work focused on facilitating state compliance and mediating the socialization of international law into national institutional frameworks. As part of this, civil society as important mediators in the socialization process was discussed, along with the constraints that hindered this mediation in Egypt.

In the mediation process, NGOs have been argued by scholars to be norm entrepreneurs, or entities that develop and frame new values and practices, and who work at the state level to facilitate more equitable politico-legal structures that align with these new values. Political and legal change, in turn, is postulated to lead to society-wide changes where all individuals eventually come to have greater respect for women's rights. Such change occurs in a top-down flow from international governance spheres to the ground level. In the Egyptian context, the long history of state corporatism, as well as emergency rule, created a challenging context where NGOs had very little political space in which to enjoin the state to make political or legal changes. This lack of political space resulted in internal bickering and mistrust among civil society members that generated concerns about their overall effectiveness as norm mediators. Partially due to this

situation with Egyptian civil society, just prior to and more rapidly since the 2011 Egyptian Revolution new independent initiatives arose around the problem of sexual harassment. As opposed to direct state engagement, these initiatives chose to employ a largely volunteer corps of community members and to focus efforts at the street level. With respect to HarassMap efforts, this community-based approach was underpinned by the philosophical belief that the locus of societal change was not rooted in the institutions of politics or law, but with the people themselves who formed the core of society. By changing the hearts and minds of enough people, i.e., by getting people to speak up and accept new norms of women's public roles, HarassMap believed that equity around women's participation in the public space could be more sustainably achieved.



#### CHAPTER 4: ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT DISCOURSES: FRAMING NORMS OF GENDER VIOLENCE AND CRIMINALITY IN EGYPT

In May 2014, HarassMap's new Marketing and Communications unit head, Noora Flinkman was participating in an interview, held early in the morning in a Western-style coffee shop in the upscale neighborhood of Maadi, not far from HarassMap's new office. Sitting in the covered courtyard, Flinkman and her interviewer, a British researcher who happened to be conducting participant observation with HarassMap at the same time I was present within the organization, were the only individuals in the café that morning. They sat at a table in which Flinkman was facing the doors that lead to a backroom area where the *shīshas* (hookahs) were prepared, while the researcher had his back to the doors. In the course of carrying out the interview, Flinkman became aware of a young man, the person in charge of providing the *shīsha*, coming out of the door. She noticed that his pants were unzipped and that he was visibly masturbating in her sightline. "I just like noticed it and he was standing in the door of this shisha room, like completely in the open, not behind anything, not like hiding inside the door halfway or anything like outside of the door...like his whole zipper was open and his whole penis was out and he was masturbating and his penis was like, I mean I could, like, ugh, I could see everything...it was completely erect..." The young man stared at Flinkman as she watched in disbelief while he masturbated in front of her.

Flinkman's experience, while disturbing, is an example of what is now recognized by anti-sexual harassment activists as a common occurrence reported by women in Egypt. In their 2014 research report, HarassMap indicated that "indecent exposure" constituted 12 percent of the more than 1200 narratives received via their crowdmapping

platform, a category they defined as “Showing intimate parts of the body or masturbating in front of someone or in their presence” (Fahmy et al. 2014, pp. 41 & 59). Prior to HarassMap’s study, UN Women similarly found that 12.8 percent of their study sample of almost 2000 women, out of 3500 total respondents, identified experiencing “Exposure by the man of private parts or hinting to it” (El Deeb 2013). Interestingly, in their 2008 study, ECWR noted that 4.3 percent of their male study population admitted to revealing themselves in public, though the study did not report the frequency of public masturbation (Hassan et al. 2008). Masturbation exists as part of a constellation of new behaviors comprising *taharrush ginsy*, which has become a regular feature of public life for women, yet Flinkman’s experience following her exposure to public masturbation is not so common in that she chose to report her sexual harassment to the police and to follow it through the court process. Her experience with police reporting helps to illuminate what activists see as problems with sexual harassment and legal avenues for redress in the country, which community-based anti-sexual harassment initiatives like HarassMap actively combat, though not directly with police and legal institutions but indirectly with community members and the public.

With Flinkman’s case serving as a starting point, the goal of this chapter is threefold: 1) to understand the efforts and tensions with criminalizing sexual harassment; 2) to explore anti-sexual harassment discourses, focusing specifically on prominent themes in the content of such discourses; 3) to examine the framing strategies employed by initiatives to change social perceptions and build a society of bystander publics that will speak up against sexual harassment; and 4) to interrogate efforts by anti-sexual harassment initiatives to persuade people of the criminal nature of sexual harassment

while bypassing legal structures. Evident themes in anti-sexual harassment discourses include defining sexual harassment as violence, challenging victim blaming rhetoric, identifying the role of men in perpetuating the problem, confronting the perceived basis of sexual harassment, managing public safety, and promoting criminality and state responsibility to end sexual harassment. Moreover, resonant and radical techniques are employed in overlapping fashion to frame sexual harassment in particular ways, such as associating desired behaviors with historic values and practices that Egyptians have held dear, mythologizing certain stereotypes around the existence of sexual harassment, and directly challenging patriarchal ideas of appropriate behaviors for women in the public space.

### **Patriarchy, Victim Blaming and the Problem of Reporting Sexual Harassment**

When Flinkman realized she was witnessing a man publicly masturbate, she immediately alerted her companion, the British researcher, who did not turn to witness the masturbation. He later indicated that he did not know what kept him from doing so. That the researcher did not actually view the masturbation event later raised some question among investigators as to the veracity of Flinkman's claims, but did not prohibit the process from moving forward. Flinkman's status as a foreigner might have helped her case with the police, but her position as a HarassMap member also led to suspicion that she was fabricating the story. In general, anti-sexual harassment and women's rights activists have noted the "double victimization" women face when reporting any form of gender violence to the police because they are often not believed, where "prosecutors tend to be skeptical of the testimony of survivors," and they are often required to bring in

two witnesses to confirm sexual harassment happened, in addition to other problems in police stations (FIDH 2014: 35 & 43; Jones 2014; Shawky 2011). In their 2008 study, ECWR noted that police tended to mock women reporting their experiences, making women reluctant to come forward to seek legal assistance (Hassan et al. 2008).

After telling the British researcher what she witnessed, Flinkman called several work colleagues, one of who showed up to the café, along with her fiancé. Together, the four decided that Flinkman should report the incident to the café owner, which she did by phone since he was not physically present that day. Seeming apologetic, the owner promised the offender would be reprimanded and/or fired. However, he did not agree to show up at the café to manage the situation until Flinkman intimated that she intended to file a police report. The owner showed up shortly thereafter and told her he had already taken the liberty of calling the *ra'īs el-mobaḥṭhīn* (Chief Investigator) at the police station and that he would take care of everything once the investigator showed up, hoping that this would satisfy Flinkman and her companions enough to leave. Instead of leaving immediately, however, the four waited in their car in the street in the hopes of speaking to the investigator when he showed. After a couple of hours, the owner then came out to let them know the investigator had come and gone and that the report was filed.

Skeptical, the four left the coffee shop but realized they did not request a physical copy of the report or the report number to follow-up on the case. They decided to go to the police station and check whether a report was actually filed. At the station, the four were directed to several offices where Flinkman had to recount her story anew each time to different investigators. Each recounting of the story generated a contradictory set of responses, where officers appeared smiling and visibly impressed with the masturbating

young man, yet they verbally cursed him and called him an animal. Flinkman stated, “Well, I remember that they, every time when I got to the part about his zipper...all of them smiled and they were kind of like shocked...people were smiling, like, that’s kind of funny...” The British researcher, who accompanied Flinkman to the station, noted of one particular investigator, “...he was like, they’re animals, and then they repeatedly sounded explanations...they said, oh but the thing is its because they can’t get married, and if they can’t get married what are they going to do? I just remember he sat there going ‘*lezim*’ (necessary)...as if it was something sad, but inevitable...”

Whether each of these encounters were required as part of the internal vetting process before Flinkman was allowed to see the Chief Investigator is unclear. However, the officers’ reactions highlight prevalent, underlying perceptions of sexual harassment and men who harass that exist more broadly in Egyptian society and among police, who HarassMap members have argued reflect the values of their society. Since the January 25, Revolution, Egyptians have increasingly viewed sexual harassment as a problem and many have frequently decried men who harass as “*hyawān*” (animals). At the same time, many (if not most) Egyptians also view sexual harassment as a fairly minor problem – certainly one that does not require the involvement of police - and one that is easily excused as the inevitable result of the deteriorating economic situation (Peoples 2008). A refrain commonly heard, and also markedly visible in survey data collected for this project, is that men harass because they have pent up tension, or “*shaḥwa*” (lust), that cannot be released through the typical channel of marriage, which is denied them by their lack of having a job or money. For this reason, despite implicit understandings that sexual harassment is somehow crossing a line in public gendered interactions, many readily

argue that sexual harassment is something that men cannot help and, usually, that women encourage in one way or another.

Such rationales became visible in Flinkman's case when she was met with the Chief Investigator and was confronted with her harasser. After a few hours at the station, Flinkman and her group were taken to an anteroom to the Chief Investigator's Office. Unbeknownst to them, officers were sent to the coffee shop to bring the harasser in for questioning. Generally speaking, it is not typical for the police to bring in a harasser for questioning. Victims of sexual harassment in Egypt are frequently the ones required to produce their own harasser (Jones 2014). Noha Rushdy's infamous 2008 sexual harassment case, the first of its kind in the country, which garnered wide media attention, was prosecuted partially because Rushdy forcibly dragged her harasser to the police station after the police insisted she needed "to bring the perpetrator in" (Ilahi 2008).

Flinkman's harasser was brought into the Chief Investigator's office prior to Flinkman and her companions. Sometime afterward, the four were permitted in to see the Chief Investigator, where Flinkman had to recount her story yet again in front of her harasser, who denied Flinkman's accusations. The young man argued that Flinkman tried to seduce him by sitting in her chair sideways with one leg hanging over the arm, leaving her spread-eagle in invitation. While the harasser's characterization of Flinkman's actions were explicitly sexual, many Egyptians often dismiss sexual harassment with less explicit, but no less sexual, explanations that women entice men to sexually harass by dressing suggestively in tight clothes, or by wearing Western clothing that is often described as akin to nakedness. For anti-sexual harassment initiatives like HarassMap, ascribing sexual harassment to women's behavior or dress is a form of blaming the

victim, which places responsibility on women to stem male desire through restrictions on their own movement and practices. Initiatives challenge the way sexual harassment is linked to male desire, where it is viewed less as a criminal act and more of a moral dilemma that women must manage. Failure to manage sexual harassment in satisfactory ways, i.e. by not engaging with the harasser or by staying out of public, ultimately results in compromises to a woman's respectability. For the initiatives, male harassers are rarely held responsible for failing to control their own behaviors, which is part and parcel of victim blaming attitudes.

Neither Flinkman nor her companions knew if the Chief Investigator believed the harasser's counterclaim. However, he permitted Flinkman to move forward with completing a report. In order to do so, she had to leave the investigative side of the police station and move over to where the uniformed officers were located, where she was once again forced to recount her story for the report. However, the British researcher noted, despite some amount of tittering, the investigators were very skeptical of the event and there was some sense they did not buy Flinkman's story. The uniformed officers, on the other hand, found the incident entirely believable, hilarious and unproblematic. Flinkman was asked several questions that were not for the purposes of the report where officers seemingly wanted to know more of the details of the event for their own amusement.

In the following days, Flinkman and the British researcher met with the *nī'eba* (Prosecutor) to be officially interviewed for legal proceedings, with the help of a lawyer provided for free by Nazra for Feminist Studies. At the Prosecutor's office, Flinkman was subjected to detailed and graphic questioning on the café layout, the way they had been sitting, the directions they were facing, as well as the masturbation event itself.

Referring to the Prosecutor, the British researcher stated, “Yeah...he laughed, as well, when you told him what happened...the way he spoke, the terminology he used was really kind of like porn terminology.” Flinkman and her companion noted that the prosecutor found her tale of the event humorous and asked them, in English, “did he cum,” followed by a laugh. Moreover, the prosecutor asked which hand the young man used and how he moved his hand. Following that, the Prosecutor wanted to know how the event left Flinkman feeling. In English, she responded that she had been disgusted, which the Prosecutor translated in his official report as feeling shamed (‘*ār*). At the same time that this was taking place, the young harasser and the café owner were also required to go through questioning. They were brought into the Prosecutor’s office while Flinkman and the British researcher were present, where the café owner denounced Flinkman as hating Egypt, hating the army and wanting to destroy the country’s reputation. Moreover, he raised questions as to whether or not Flinkman was a member of the *Ikhwān* (Muslim Brotherhood) and how her position as a staff member at HarassMap lead her to fabricate accusations to create a story, both of which the Prosecutor appeared to seriously consider.

Ultimately, Flinkman’s case went to court and the young harasser was sentenced to a year in jail. However, her experience in the process highlights critical issues surrounding public perceptions of sexual harassment that civil society entities have identified as problematic and work to combat.

Between 2005 and the start of the Revolution, the public viewed (and largely still views) sexual harassment as a relatively insignificant problem, if a problem at all. When sexual harassment cases arise, many often view them more as moral or interpersonal conflicts between men and women, based in a number of precipitating factors. As



described above, one of those factors is economic, where sexual harassment is seen as the inevitable expression of masculine insecurity given changing conditions that restrict their access to resources and culturally prescribed lifeways. Conflict occurs because men and women are either in competition for limited jobs or men are faced with an inability to meet their social obligations, thus resulting in them lashing out against women.

Other factors include a variety of social conditions, such as a lack of being properly brought up and having insufficient religious belief, which people apply to both women and men in sexual harassment incidents. In addition, people frequently ascribe the problem of sexual harassment to one of women dressing according to Western and not Eastern/Islamic standards or, even if dressed in *hijāb* (head scarf) and *niqāb* (face veil), wearing clothing too tight and walking in suggestive ways, among other factors (Fahmy et al. 2014). Both men and women are often accused of failing to adhere to socially or religiously prescribed codes of behavior. Yet, more specifically, women are still largely assumed to be the ones transgressing sexual boundaries, thus forcing men to likewise transgress. The moral or interpersonal dilemmas raised by public sexual harassment can be resolved with changes in women's presence or comportment in public space – not changes in men's behavior and especially not through criminal proceedings.

Moreover, anti-sexual harassment groups note the connection people make between sexual harassment and sex or sexual desire. Hussein El-Shafei, Director of HarassMap's Community Outreach Unit, highlighted one case of an outreach event that occurred outside of the Alexandria University campus following an incident in which a young girl was injured while being sexual harassed. Speaking with one vendor in the street around the campus, El-Shafei indicated that the man stated, "yeah, this is awful, but

you know what's also awful? I always see those couples making out here...they're kissing and touching and walking hand in hand..." To El-Shafei, while talking about *taharrush ginsy*, the vendor was unable to distinguish the difference between consensual and non-consensual sexual interludes. The vendor conflated both the sexual harassment that resulted in injury to the girl with the "making out" of other students in public, which El-Shafei disparaged, saying "I'm like, making out here in a main street in front of Alexandria Uni?" It should be noted that "making out" in Egypt is not necessarily equivalent to making out in the West, where kisses in public, if they occur between men and women, would include double-cheeked greetings. Generally speaking, these are not considered appropriate for men and women in public and might hint at sexual access.

Organizations like HarassMap, in addition to other community-based groups, challenge these patriarchal norms in their discourses and messaging, which privilege and excuse male behavior while placing the blame on women for allowing themselves to be victimized. Anti-sexual harassment groups eschew these gendered constructions, noting that sexual harassment is a form of male control over women to force them into appropriate behavior. Eba'a El-Tamimi, the former Marketing and Communications Director at HarassMap stated, "Not all but a lot of men see women as whores... harassment is about control and the harassment that happens is often disgusting." Other activists have argued sexual harassment is a way of punishing women, as noted by Dalia Abdel Hamid, the gender officer at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, who said:

"I think the way sexual violence is used in Egypt on a daily basis and on that severity, and the forms, like mob assaults and the gang harassment and so on, these are actually tools to punish women for their presence in public space and I think maybe because that presence has exponentially increased after the revolution, also the rate of the sexual violence has changed, it has increased as equally. I think it's a way to express...that inferior look to women, you know? Sometimes I think that men in the society are being brought up in a way that they are

superior...and they find that women are managers and that they are in far better places sometimes...and they have to be punished.”

In addition, anti-sexual harassment groups note that the social acceptability of sexual harassment in Egypt also stems from larger public ignorance of that which constitutes *taharrush ginsy*. Referring to Flinkman’s experience, an example of both patriarchal public beliefs and the lack of awareness is visible in how the police officers and prosecutor treated public masturbation as humorous and the necessary behavior of a frustrated man unlikely able to marry and who could not help himself. Such behavior was not treated as a violating act with detrimental effects on women. While the law gave Flinkman a narrow avenue by which to seek redress for a public act that she felt to be sexually harassing, her ability to do so did not come easily and may have been made more possible by both her status as foreigner and as an anti-sexual harassment activist who did not feel shamed, but angered, by being victimized and who could insist that her case be prosecuted. Anti-sexual harassment discourses confront this lack of public understanding by including a wide range of behaviors into new frames of sexual harassment, where sexual harassment is promoted as a form of violence against women.

An important point to stipulate here is that women in Egypt overwhelmingly refuse to report their experiences of sexual harassment to the police for reasons evident in Flinkman’s case. HarassMap’s 2014 study noted that less than 1% of women in their survey sample indicated they have reported their harasser to police and that 78% of women feared the scandal associated with reporting (Fahmy et al. 2014). Through the very terminologies it employs, the law is encoded with the shame of being dishonored through sexual harassment and other forms of gender violence. Shame was apparent in how the prosecutor had to describe Flinkman’s feelings about being harassed in order to

move the case forward, which most women in Egypt are loath to accept (FIDH 2014). Not until after the Revolution, and more specifically until 2014 when the government instituted Law 306 a and b illegalizing *taharrush ginsy*, most Egyptians found the criminal nature of sexual harassment dubious. Promoting the criminality of sexual harassment, therefore, is a vital facet of discursive approaches, and even promoting some limited form of reporting is undertaken to encourage people, and law enforcement, to see sexual harassment as a violation of women's bodies and personal space and worth prosecuting. However, as will be discussed, criminality also has a dimension outside of the law on which entities like HarassMap center their discourses.

### *Criminalizing Sexual Harassment*

Anti-sexual harassment groups have promoted sexual harassment as a crime since ECWR began its work in 2005. ECWR's work fluctuated over the three years that its anti-sexual harassment program was most active. It began with a community-driven focus on changing social perspectives and behaviors and then shifted to advocacy-based approaches that centered on reconfiguring the penal code to include sexual harassment. The shift in focus was precipitated by several factors, including the departure by the end of 2008 of key figures managing their anti-sexual harassment program. Rebecca Chiao and Engy Ghazlan were central in driving the community-based focused that waned toward the end of their tenure at ECWR. Additionally, as the anti-sexual harassment program gained in notoriety, spurred by multiple television and radio appearances, print articles, and UNFPA funding awarded in 2007, the program, which started informally, was drawn into ECWR's more formal structure of political and legal advocacy work.

In 2008, the same year that ECWR released “Clouds in Egypt’s Sky,” they sent a draft amendment of penal code article 278 to the Egyptian parliament. The amendment sought to include the term “sexual harassment” to the text of the law that illegalized violations of honor and the corruption of morals (FIDH 2013). Their amendment did not remove the connotations of shame contained within the wording of the article. However, the draft stipulated a punishment of 2000 Egyptian pounds and up to one year in jail for “deeds such as touching, pursuit, stalking, or other actions, or by explicit or implicit sexual or obscene words, or via telephone, the internet or messages containing sexual images, texts, or inscriptions (FIDH 2013: 74-75). ECWR never received a response to their draft, which they resubmitted to the President’s Office in 2012, also with no response. In 2009, ECWR published findings from a conference held on the cultural forms and legal gaps regarding sexual harassment in the Arab region. In their report, they argued that the spread of sexual harassment as a problem was the result of the lack of a “legal and security deterrence and the absence of specific legislation for this crime” (*ghiyāb al-rada’ al-amnī wa al-qānunī al-nātag ‘an ‘adam wagud tashri’a khās bi-hathihī al-garīma*) (ECWR 2009: 118). The conference report concluded by recommending amending the law to criminalize sexual harassment, though ECWR emphasized workplace sexual harassment, which conflicts with their 2008 study that noted workplace sexual harassment was not as prevalent in Egypt as in the public space.

ECWR’s draft amendment was one of several amendments sent to either the parliament or the president between the years 2005 and 2014 by women’s advocacy NGOs, many of which were part of the Taskforce to Combat Sexual Violence. The other drafts focused on differing facets of violence against women, including rape and

domestic violence, which also received no responses from the government. By 2009, this early anti-sexual harassment work was well ensconced within a field of transnational advocacy focused on ending gender-based violence through legal channels. Amar noted that ECWR was among those NGOs “that drew most directly on UN gender doctrines and CEDAW institutions, funds, discourses and legal-juridical mobilizing strategies” (2011: 318). Moreover, he argued that the work of these NGO’s

“reveal the particular gendered and moralized politics of the ‘human security’ era. In this period, NGOized civil society actions move in constant cycles to demand more police protection of gendered and culturalized subjects of re-essentialized gender and moralized sexuality that can only appear for more police rescue and paramilitarized governance” (Amar 2011: 318).

Amar was particularly concerned with how the state itself had appropriated anti-sexual harassment discourses in its securitization rhetoric, even as it deployed tactics of sexual violence targeted at female respectability to undermine Revolutionary protest. His analysis, however, highlights the intersection of what Hasso (2009) and Abu Lughod (2010) have referred to as transnational governmentality with legal and police practices in anti-sexual harassment NGO work.

When HarassMap formed in late 2010, its’ co-founders were equally embedded within the same transnational networks as ECWR. Three of the four co-founders were active development workers, one of whom had worked on FGM projects at the United National Population Fund and was involved in funding ECWR’s anti-sexual harassment program, Amel Fahmy. However, in the beginning, HarassMap formed almost as a side project of these co-founders, with no formal structure and no funding. The co-founders proceeded with an incomplete platform employing the Ushahidi technology, which was growing in its international applications for elections monitoring and combatting political corruption, with the belief that they could manage the work in addition to their full-time

jobs in NGOs elsewhere. HarassMap's transnational connections may have been initially "looser" than those of ECWR because it was not intended to grow as it did, but as it grew so did its transnational network of donors, including a number of agencies of the United Nations, the International Development Research Center (IDRC), German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Mediterranean Women's Fund, and the Global Fund for Women, among others. Even with an expanding transnational network, Engy Ghozlan noted that in the beginning they "tried to basically protect it [HarassMap]...we tried to be really conservative in choosing who to work with and how...we wouldn't take any serious partnerships or serious corporation things" (Interview 2014). Unlike ECWR and other advocacy NGOs at the time, HarassMap's co-founders had a different vision of the Egyptian political and legal context, which drove their approach toward promoting the criminality of sexual harassment.

The HarassMap co-founders were concerned with what they saw as two prevailing problems with respect to civil society work and with the government response to sexual violence. On the one hand, they were wary of "NGOized" work. This wariness stemmed partially from a fear of government co-optation and the government limiting the kinds of activities they sought to undertake. According to Rebecca Chiao, "The way the government controls things, or the way the system is set up, is that it all revolves around money. Kind of...so, like you register as an NGO so that you have access to money and the byproduct is you get government control" (Interview 2012). Additionally, Chiao and Ghozlan both voiced their disinterest in what they saw as the "same patterns" of NGO work, that were "risk averse," involving trainings, seminars, press conferences and reports to "raise awareness." Here, "awareness" was Chiao's way of indicating that NGO

work tended to center on a set of regularized practices, like research, holding workshops or trainings, and report writing. In one interview about how HarassMap measured its impact, Chiao excitedly stated, “Screw awareness, let’s do something!,” which highlighted Chiao’s belief in the ineffectiveness of NGOized work that was, to some extent, disassociated from the community (Interview 2012). Ghazlan also indicated that they “needed to take the discussion to the street and live it...” underscoring a widespread sentiment among HarassMap staff and volunteers of the need for more active and decentralized forms of engagement with community members taking the lead, and fewer bureaucratic entanglements prevalent within NGO work (Interview 2014).

On the other hand, the HarassMap co-founders believed the government had no incentive to change its stance on issues of violence against women. Chiao, in particular, expressed some uncertainty in the effectiveness of NGO advocacy work and that the NGOs alone were not going to induce political or legal change, certainly not without much broader popular support to force the state to change (Interview 2015). Therefore, HarassMap from the beginning was unconcerned with political and legal work. As Chiao stated, “We don’t really care about the law, we don’t care at all about the law actually. Um, we don’t care about the media or funding or the things that NGOs typically care about. What we judge our success by, internally, is how many people are coming up to us and wanting to get involved and taking action...” (Interview 2012). Additionally, most HarassMap staff believed the police, as instruments of the government, were also part of the problem of reproducing sexual harassment in the country.

For the most part, HarassMap’s work has avoided either targeting or cooperating with the state and police, with some exceptions following the passage of the 2014 law on



sexual harassment. In the spring of 2015, HarassMap launched a new campaign called “*mutaharrish mugrim*” (The Harasser is a Criminal). The campaign included the first public service announcements that HarassMap created, which were widely circulated on television. The goal of the campaign was to let people know more widely that there was a new law criminalizing sexual harassment. Toward that end, two commercials circulated, one showing a pair of handcuffed male hands with police sirens sounding in the background and the second showing a woman on a crowded bus at night standing up to a harasser while bystanders watch. Textual messaging with the commercials highlighted the text of the new law and also told bystanders they could be silent no more because sexual harassment is a crime. According to Noora Flinkman, the PSAs and the campaign messages that followed were designed as a call to action, giving people tips on how to intervene in sexual harassment cases. Based on Flinkman’s experience reporting her case of sexual harassment to the police, some of the messages also gave people tips for managing the reporting process inside of the police stations. She stated, “we don’t want to sound as if there is no problem with the police, because there is” (Interview 2015). Moreover, while lauding the passage of the new sexual harassment law, numerous HarassMap staff members have noted the law alone is not enough to end the problem.

HarassMap’s approach to promoting the criminality of sexual harassment draws on transnational discourses of women’s rights and the criminality of violence against women. It also depends on developing a moral sensibility among the public in the wrongness of sexual harassment, even if people know they will not be punished. HarassMap seeks to infuse a new understanding of sexual harassment and social responsibility within the public by framing new notions of violence, challenging victim

blaming, and encouraging bystanders take responsibility and speak up. This approach both differs from and aligns with that of other independent anti-sexual harassment initiatives. For instance, Harakat Bassma works closely with the police when running outreach or patrols in the street, obtaining permissions to carry out community work and also letting the police know they are not supplanting but assisting them to catch harassers. Shoft Taharrush also works closely with the police and the Ministry of Interior to monitor sexual harassment units and ensure their proper operation. Both, however, also challenge victim blaming and, in part, approach bystanders, though they also speak directly to victim/survivors and harassers. The sections below highlight some of the more prevalent themes in anti-sexual harassment discourse in more detail.

### **New Norms of Sexual Harassment in Egypt**

As discussed in the previous chapter, civil society entities are key mediators and translators of women's rights norms. While much theorizing on processes of mediation look at vertical flows and center on the socialization of new norms within state institutional structures, mediation also operates at the horizontal, or community, level. Such horizontal mediation, however, has received less analytic attention and is, in part, the focus of this chapter. This section explores how civil society entities in Egypt discursively mediate change around sexual harassment at the ground level, with messages directed at community members, and not state actors, that are intended to create new understandings of gender and women's rights, as well as build a corps of bystander publics that will speak up against sexual harassment. Seven prominent themes are visible in anti-sexual harassment discourses. Each theme is representative of new values, beliefs,

or norms, which anti-sexual organizations seek to promote across Egyptian society, and include a range of discursive elements that frame the norm in particular ways.

### *Defining Sexual Harassment: From Mu'āksa to Taharrush*

Naming sexual harassment as an existing phenomenon has been a contentious process, not only in Egypt but also in other contexts where activism involves both community-level and legal change. Scholars note that naming and labeling sexual harassment, which only occurred as late as 1976 in the women's movement in the United State, increases its salience and makes visible acts that both objectify and humiliate women (Wood 2009: 352). However, this naming process is laden with tensions that cut across gender, class and age, where women's complaints and sentiments are frequently distrusted and dismissed by both men and women of all ages and backgrounds, which often leads to silence from women on the issue.

In their study of American women, Magley et al. (1999) identify a discrepancy between women's experiences at work and school and their labeling of those experiences as sexual harassment. The authors postulated that women's lack of labeling was related to either 1) a large gap between their conceptual understanding of sexual harassment and its psychological outcomes; 2) the perceived ambiguity of the situation, i.e. uncertainty whether non-coercive yet unwanted behaviors can be considered sexual harassment; and/or 3) the consequences of labeling, either from an organizational or social standpoint, where women hesitate to be labeled a victim or to be mistreated for labeling their experiences in ways that do not cohere with wider social norms. The authors' argument highlight that the women in their study were also confused as to what constituted sexual

harassment. In other words, the conceptual frames that arose around sexual harassment in the United States generated public perceptions that prevented women from unequivocally identifying certain behaviors as acts of sexual harassment. In part, legal definitions centered on coercion and hostility in economic contexts play a role, thus also illustrating fissures between legal definitions and social perceptions (Fitzgerald et al. 2010).

In the Egyptian context, defining and raising awareness around sexual harassment has been no less problematic for women's movements seeking to name and bring to light sexually-based discriminatory behaviors targeting women. Certainly, political and legal inattention to the problem until recently has contributed to a lack of salience around the issue. Even with the 2014 amendment to Article 306, which specifically added *taharrush ginsy* to the penal code, women's groups argue that its narrow wording limits the definition of what constitutes sexual harassment and promotes a structure that conflates experiences of sexual violence with the loss of honor (El-Rifae 2014; Nazra 2014a). It is unclear how the wording of this amendment, along with consequent prosecutions under this law, will impact local perceptions of sexual harassment in the future. Beyond (and perhaps more important than) legal structures, the way *taharrush ginsy* now signifies many forms of gender violence within the anti-sexual harassment movement and the media, particularly since the Revolution, creates additional confusion and contributes to continued public denial that certain behaviors are sexual harassment. Aside from this lack of clarity, anti-sexual harassment groups have created a new, or what activists view as "correct," and bounded definition of sexual harassment.

When ECWR first targeted sexual harassment as a social problem, they sought to name and define sexual harassment in particular ways. At the time that ECWR began its

work on sexual harassment, there was no popular conception that sexually-based discriminatory behaviors that violated women's rights in the public space was a real phenomenon. According to ECWR's director, Nehad Aboul Qomsan, people widely understood certain forms of gendered street interactions as *mu'āksa*, often conceptualized as flirting or teasing. Interestingly, very little is understood about the concept of *mu'āksa*, despite the wealth of description and theory that exists on women, gendered interactions, marriage and sexuality in Egypt and the region (see Ahmed 1992; Ali 2006; Early 1993; El Kholy 2002; Hasso 2011). In this literature, *mu'āksa* is limitedly discussed as a consensual ritual courting practice that may include more aggressive behaviors that women are seemingly able to manage. With respect to women's public presence and social injunctions that require them to refrain from interactions with men in the street, Singerman notes, "In reality, these excursions are used by some women as opportunities to flirt with young men, or to meet others. However, in *sh'abī* [popular] communities both parties know the limits of this flirtatious interaction, and women will seldom tolerate insulting or abusive behavior" (1995: 82). Moreover, Ryzova (2005) mentions that *mu'āksa*, in a way, is a game and that erotic street encounters loom large in the popular imagination. Such flirtations occur within a restricted field of sexualized practice and women, in their aggressive sexuality, are cognizant of how to display their *mafātan* (charms) while maintaining strict codes of modesty (Ryzova 2005: 108). She argues this is evident as far back as the 1930's with the popularization of the figure of the *bint al-balad*, a concept that parallels *ibn al-balad*, both of which signify women and men of the lower/popular classes. While this understanding of *mu'āksa* in one sense begins to underscore how women themselves are sexual beings, albeit within a system that

fetishizes and objectifies their bodies, what is left abundantly unclear is the boundary between consensual street flirting and non-consensual sexual abuse. Moreover, there is no analysis of the impact of supposed street flirting on women's sensibilities.

Early surveys that ECWR's volunteer team collected from 2005-2006 helped them to construct a new ethic around sexual harassment as a distinct set of practices that were not part of this ritualized courtship, but instead represented as unwanted (un-coerced) non-physical and physical behaviors that were sexual in orientation and that were psychologically detrimental (Hassan et al. 2008). For instance, a number of these early surveys highlighted how women felt threatened, afraid, disgusted and angry with being followed, leveled with insults and constant commenting, whistled and hissed at, invited for dates and sex, witnessing many cases of public masturbation and nakedness, being pushed to the ground by men on passing motorcycles or bikes, as well as well as having their buttocks, legs and breasts grabbed and fondled, often painfully so. In some cases, women's stories also noted their (or their friends') experiences with attempted rape. These stories and more served as the basis for additional surveys that ECWR conducted as part of a larger UNFPA funded scientific study, the results of which were published in their 2008 report, and which established seven forms of sexual harassment that were commonly experienced by women in public contexts, primarily transportation: "touching, noises (including whistling, hissing noises, kissing sounds, and the like.), ogling of women's bodies, verbal harassment of a sexually explicit nature, stalking or following, phone harassment, and indecent exposure" (Hassan et al. 2008: 15).

ECWR's goal when its program began was to frame these behaviors in a new light, to disconnect them from consensual flirtation that was unproblematic and could be

easily handled by savvy women. Instead, ECWR sought to expose the imbalances in gendered power that existed in public space and how such actions had very negative ramifications for many women, as demonstrated in the more than 10,000 surveys that were submitted over the years that their program was active. Framing sexual harassment as a form of violence was critical and aligned with global trends in women's rights advocacy that sought an end to violence against women. According to Aboul Qomsan, because of the level of tolerance in Egypt for *mu'āksa*, for behaviors that many saw as flattering, ECWR undertook a comparative analysis to review how other countries legislatively defined sexual harassment. She noted that none of the countries in the Arab region that they examined, including Algeria, Tunisia, and Jordan, had codified definitions of sexual harassment. In this situation, employing the term *taḥarrush ginsy* to refer to these behaviors further underscored the inequality and violence in sexually harassing behaviors. This naming of sexual harassment as *taḥarrush ginsy* changed the nature of the discussion, and undermined the stereotypical image of the sexually aggressive (and perhaps promiscuous) *bint al-balad*. Moreover, it made sexual harassment a potentially criminal offense, which ECWR did not believe possible in its configuration as *mu'āksa*.

This discussion is not intended to dismiss the existence of women's flirtations in public space. Despite the dearth of literature examining male and female pre/non-marital, sexualized interactions or courtship practices, anecdotal evidence obtained in interviews from activists indicate that young women, particularly in high schools, actively engage in sexually harassing young men. How harassing female behaviors can be interpreted, whether unwanted by their male victims or a form of ritual, sexualized interplay, is

unfortunately unclear. However, prevailing local discourses have long assembled all forms of sexualized street interactions under the concept of *mu'āksa*, something women are presumed to enjoy. With anti-sexual harassment activism that arose in 2005, this view was challenged for the first time. Part of ECWR's framing technique was to position sexual harassment as a threat to public safety, thereby obligating the state to create and enforce better laws protecting women (Rizzo et al. 2008 & 2012).

Since the Revolution, more active campaigns have also sought to delineate and frame sexual harassment in new ways and to distinguish it from other forms of gender violence. Such campaigns are decidedly more vigorous than ECWR's campaign in the sheer amount of messages that are generated, their use of imperative linguistic forms, and their visual scope in illustrating problematic behaviors that denigrate women. For instance, the joint *ṣallahha fi dimāghak* (Fix It In Your Mind/Get It Right) campaign, organized by HarassMap, Nazra for Feminist Studies, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), and Tahrir Bodyguards, aimed to "correct" social misperceptions around *taḥarrush ginsy* and other forms of gender violence. Accordingly, activists attempted to more firmly define different acts of sexual violence and to emphasize how certain behaviors that might have previously been associated with *mu'āksa* were actually a form of *taḥarrush*. Images 1- 4 represent four campaign posters from *ṣallahha fi dimāghak* that were released in December 2013. In each, various behaviors, including staring, catcalls, and following/stalking are all argued to be *nuw'a min el-anwā' el-taḥarrush*, or forms of sexual harassment. Staring is referenced as appropriate for watching football matches, not women's bodies; catcalling is a method for getting cats and not women to pay heed; and following/stalking is acceptable only if going after a thief. Moreover, touching, facial





Illustration 1:  
“Staring”

Illustration 2:  
“Catcalling”

Illustration 3  
“Following”

Illustration 4  
“This is All Sexual Harassment”

expressions, invitations, and phone calls are also identified as sexual harassment. Nazra later produced a concept paper that separated sexual harassment from rape and assault, using HarassMap’s categories to identify it as, “ogling, facial expressions, catcalls, comments, sexual invites, unwanted attention, sexual photographs, online harassment, telephone calls’ harassment, touching and nudity/indecent exposure/flashing of sexual organs” (Nazra 2014b).

### *Rejecting Victim Blaming*

A prominent aspect of anti-sexual harassment discourses is to disrupt widespread beliefs that women are to blame for the sexual harassment they experience. Victim blaming rhetoric in Egypt is comprised of a number of features, usually centered on some aspect of women’s bodies, their movements, or their vocalizations in public. As noted in Fahmy et al. (2014), the most widely cited accusation leveled against women who experience sexual harassment is that they dress inappropriately, thus attracting the interest and attention of men in the street. The 2008 ECWR, 2013 UN Women, and 2014 HarassMap studies all noted widespread perceptions among men and women that

wearing revealing clothes contributes to sexual harassment (Hassan et al. 2008; El-Deeb 2013; Fahmy et al. 2014). Survey analysis for this project similarly found expansive public perceptions that wearing tight clothes, in particular skinny jeans or even tight robes (*'abāyāt*), that made it easy for men to see bodily forms, especially in the breast and pelvic region, also contribute to women's sexual harassment. Walking with shaking hips or buttocks, laughing or speaking loudly, wearing too much make-up, and gazing too long are additional components of this victim blaming rhetoric. As evident in the example that opened this chapter, the accusation that Flinkman incited the young man to masturbate in front of her because she allegedly sat with legs open, similarly highlights both the prevailing norm that women's bodies should be constrained in public and the fact that truth is not necessarily critical in situations of sexual harassment. Deeply ingrained mistrust of female sexuality, stemming from beliefs that women's bodies are *'awra* (private) and lead to *fitna* (chaos), find expression and acceptance in the pervasive rhetoric that makes them responsible for attracting inappropriate male attention. However, whether women actually are or are not adhering to modesty codes is irrelevant, as women customarily assume blame, and their garments and actions will be accordingly criticized regardless of any possible truth.

Within this framework of public perceptions, anti-sexual harassment discourses are geared toward undercutting this victim blaming mentality, both by challenging public perceptions and by encouraging women to reject the blame that is assigned to them. Anti-sexual harassment activists promote new norms and values that support women's claims of sexual harassment as truthful and that lay blame instead on harassers themselves for transgressing other critical social values, such as *ged'ana* (dependability or being

upstanding), *shahāma* (magnanimity), *karama* (dignity), or *iḥtaram* (respect)<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, NGOs and initiatives advance new norms to women that they are strong and right in their claims, emboldening them to take control over their bodies and to speak up and refuse to accept social censure for actions that discriminate against them. Messaging campaigns released since 2012, largely through online social media but also through offline community events, are geared toward this effort.

One of HarassMap's first campaigns, "*byitharrash lih?*" (Why Does He Harass?), aimed to counter what they saw as unsupported myths that deflected blame for sexual harassment. HarassMap argued that the blame for sexual harassment rested with society as a whole, not just with men, for allowing the practice to continue. The campaign itself brought to light multiple issues, but victim blaming was a critical facet. Comprised of ten statements that challenged a number of myths, presented in visually simple, textual, point and counterpoint fashion, three of these slogans focused specifically on women's bodies. The statements contrasted gendered stereotypes against the contradictory realities made visible through the stories of thousands of women elicited in the ECWR research, as well as by HarassMap's online crowdsourcing site, where women could report their experiences anonymously. Such statements included, with the accompanying transliterated Arabic: 1) If the reason for sexual harassment is women leaving their homes, then what is the reason for phone harassment? *Law el-taḥarrush sababu nazul al-sitt min al-bayt, ṭayyeb, al-taḥarrushāt al-telefuniyya sababha eih?*; 2) If the reason for sexual harassment is women's bodies and charms, then why do they [reference to a plural

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<sup>7</sup> *Ged'ana*, *shahāma*, *karama*, and *iḥtaram* were all terms identified by many participants in HarassMap organized focus groups that were conducted in Spring 2014 to better understand people's values and what would make them stand up to sexual harassment.

you] harass children? *Law al-taḥarrush sababu gism al-marāa wa mafātanha, byitharrashu bil-atfāl lih?*; 3) If the reason for sexual harassment is women's dress, why do they [reference to a plural you] harass women in *niqab*? *Law al- taḥarrush sababu libs al-marāa, byitharrashu bil-munaqabba lih?*.

In late 2013, the joint *ṣallaḥha fī dimāghak* campaign similarly contained messaging that reframed how blame was assigned for sexual harassment. As with defining sexual harassment, challenges to victim blaming rhetoric were also conducted using imperative linguistic forms, where participating initiatives demanded that society see the problem differently. For example, as visible in image 5, campaign posters stated 1) Don't say it's because of how she's dressed, say what happened to her is a crime, 2) Don't say it's because of how she walks, say I won't be silent when she is harassed, 3) Don't say it's because she was out late, say it's her right to walk safely anytime, 4) Don't say why was she there, say why did he touch her. Moreover, as part of the framing process, these same posters illuminated the widespread effect of sexual harassment on all women. They emphasized there were no differences in women's experiences of sexual harassment based on how they dressed, walked, their presence in public at any time of day and at any location. Messaging and imagery highlighted that women in veils were just as exposed to sexual harassment as women who wore more revealing clothes, and that even children could be victims of sexual harassment. Walking with caution was the same as walking like a soldier, while being out 24 hours of the day, whether at school, work, or at the market, made all women consistently vulnerable to sexual harassment.

The *mesh sākta* (I Will Not Be Silent) campaign in early 2014 was one of the first released by HarassMap that did not target bystanders. There were two underlying reasons for deploying *mesh sākta*. One was to speak directly to women, who studies showed were primarily the targets of sexual harassment. The second was to encourage reporting via HarassMap's online crowdsourcing platform. Like the *byitharrash lih?* campaign, *mesh sākta* included a messaging component disseminated on flyers, posters, postcards, and stickers that provided women with a conceptual framework to reject being blamed and accepting the sexual harassment they experienced. The campaign was comprised of twelve statements and a set of tips for how women could defend themselves, take control of their bodies and not be a victim, and make positive steps toward ending the larger problem of sexual harassment. Women were to know that they were not silent, accepting, weak, afraid, wrong, alone, hiding, comfortable, broken, shy, and that they would not forgive or ignore. With each of these messages, a corresponding tip encouraged women to not back down from their rights, fight against sexual harassment, report their stories,

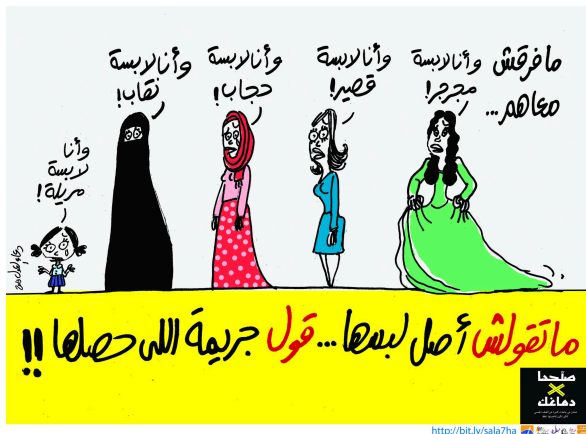


Illustration 5: “Don’t say it’s because of how she’s dressed”

give their testimony, participate in self-defense and exercise to strengthen their bodies and mental health, volunteer their energies with a social initiative fighting sexual harassment and to, essentially, “take back the night.”

### *Men as Animals*

In the HarassMap Academy offered in Fall 2013, held at Dina's Hostel on Abdel Khalek Tharwat Street in downtown Cairo, one of the final workshop sessions to be organized after a long week of training included a talk from the well-known political blogger, Sandmonkey. Following this session, trainees would be going into the streets to practice speaking with bystanders. Before they did, HarassMap's Community Outreach Director wanted the trainees to receive more advice and perspective on the problem of sexual harassment. Sandmonkey covered a range of topics, the most salient of which was his characterization of male sexuality and the male agenda in Egyptian society. Among the claims he made were that men, in general, were obsessed with sex and relationships, and they wanted to control women, often not directly but through the use of manipulation. He noted that there was a great deal of peer pressure among men to behave in particular ways, that, in part, included exhibiting the ability to get girls. He further stated that the male ego was fragile and that there was fear among men that they would be judged harshly for not adhering to normative standards of manhood. He tied these claims to assertions around the prevalence of men watching online pornography where an informal survey that he conducted demonstrated that Egyptian men largely preferred sexually violent pornography that included rape. According to HarassMap's Community Outreach Director, Sandmonkey's underlying claim was that there could be no separation between sex and violence in the Egyptian male imagination. Within this context, Sandmonkey argued that sexual harassment – *taharrush* – was a disease and that the way people were socialized and educated needed to be changed.



Illustration 6:  
“Open 24/7”



Illustration 7:  
“Can’t control myself”



Illustration 8:  
“I was just joking with her.”

Such claims, at once, appear somewhat dubious yet also offer insights into how some activists perceive fundamental facets of the male psyche and social practices that inform (and are informed by) patriarchal norms, which anti-sexual harassment initiatives have sought to combat in various ways. Notwithstanding criticisms that Sandmonkey’s claims assume sexual violence is, somehow, biologically programmed, in which case activism geared toward sociocultural or political change might be potentially irrelevant, his argument establishes a connection between sexual harassment with control, power, and male desire, even though the three major studies on sexual harassment in Egypt demonstrated that men report being the victims of sexual harassment, albeit in more limited numbers. While the sexual harassment of men has not received a great deal of attention, such practices, as argued in Chapter 2, help to reaffirm the heterosexual order, where men are reminded of what qualities are valued as masculine, and not necessarily because men, as a class, suffer the same level of discrimination as women (Bergdahl and Magley 1996; Stockdale et al. 1999).

Some elements of anti-sexual harassment discourses present the image of male sexuality as bestial and men as animals. Activists are not alone in sometimes presenting

men as animals, but a number of the young women that participated in the focus group sessions organized by the Harassmap contracted market research firm in spring 2014 similarly made reference to harassers as “*ḥyawān/ ḥyawānār*” (animals). This is a common refrain in everyday contexts. Images 6-7 from the *ṣallaḥha fī dimāghak* campaign depicted harassing men as both wolves that prey on and dogs that chase after women in public. Men are shown as either sexually available 24 hours of the day (image 6), unable to “*imsak nefsy*”, or control themselves (image 7), or as joking with women (image 8). Here, aggressive, and even hostile, sexuality is reversed and not the domain of untrustworthy, sexually promiscuous women that are the source of chaos, but perpetrated by men that feel entitled to women’s bodies. Such imagery and messaging that turns men into animals both naturalizes and debases sex obsession in men, as noted by Sandmonkey

However, the idea of men as animals does not resonate equally among activists. Within HarassMap, some of the members raised concerns over the negative portrayal of men in the *ṣallaḥha* campaign and the idea that anti-sexual harassment work could be viewed as an attack on masculinity. Scholars examining prior aspects of anti-sexual harassment work raised such criticisms, arguing that the focus on street sexual harassment and anonymous men created a class of unruly male subjects in need of policing (Abu Lughod 2010; Amar 2011). Activists argue for the need to remain gender inclusive, particularly given that so many anti-sexual harassment volunteers are men, and to refrain from alienating men, while simultaneously trying to curb what is viewed as a gendered imbalance of power that contributes to sexualized discrimination against women.



### *Rejecting Socially Accepted Stereotypes of Sexual Harassment*

The fundamental goal of HarassMap's work, articulated in their mission statement, is societal rejection of, and therefore an end to, sexual harassment. In addition to challenging victim blaming, meeting this goal requires undercutting many of the most commonly held normative assumptions about the reasons why sexual harassment exists. Many of these assumptions are built around the deteriorating economic situation in Egypt, which contributes to what some have argued to be a crisis of masculinity (Peoples 2008). Accordingly, the lack of employment leads to both idle young men hanging out in the street, as well as the inability of men to save towards marriage. Here, men sexually harass as an outlet to release pent up sexual frustration. Peoples argued that men also harass because an inability to marry subverts traditional male roles and erodes masculinity as understood in Egyptian society. In this vein, men sexually harass in order to maintain and perform their masculinity in new ways. A portion of this reasoning was challenged in the *byitharrash lih?* campaign, where HarassMap activists asked two pointed questions: 1) If the reason for sexual harassment is delayed marriage, then why do father's harass? *Law el-taharrush sababu tākhir sin el-gawāz, abu el- 'ayāl byitharrash lih?*, and 2) If the reason for sexual harassment is sexual repression, why do children harass? *Law el- taharrush sababu el-kabt el-ginsy, illy 'andu sab 'a sinīn byitharrash lih?*. The frames generated by HarassMap denied the widely held belief that sexual harassment was inevitable as men sought sexual release, as illustrated in the example at the beginning of this chapter where the police investigator indicated that sexual harassment was inevitable when men were unable to marry.

The above examples further disrupt other stereotypes around sexual harassment, including that it is an age-related problem. Sexual harassment is widely seen as a youth-based activity engaged in by pubescent, sexually awakening teenagers or young adults as they navigate gendered space. Consequently, there is a sense that young children and older men do not engage in such behaviors because either they are not sexually aware or they are already sexually satisfied through marital relations. In their 2014 study, HarassMap, and even ECWR and UN Women before them, addressed this issue of age-based distinctions around sexual harassment. They noted that men of all ages harass, a fact that has become a feature of their outreach messaging to bystanders in the street. Although their official statistics illustrate that the majority of harassers are between the ages of 18 and 24, as reported by sexually harassed women. These statistics highlight the 18-45 age brackets, but what is not visible in their report is that HarassMap collected information on harassers from age 14, and possibly younger. Much of the data that came in via their Ushahidi map provided data on nominal ages, for example *sin el-madrassa* (school aged) or *tifl* (young boy). This data was sorted and some 39 percent or so of the sample of harassers from the online data appeared to be young boys. It was not presented in their study because of the unreliability of the data, but it became a part of the discursive message that very young children harass and are taught to do so by harassing older family members. In challenging this age distinction, HarassMap argued that sexual harassment is not a transitional event in the male life cycle, but a facet of gendered inequality that the young are socialized to accept in Egypt.

Moreover, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, and drugs feature in the discourse, if not in all of the campaign messaging. Such reasons were pervasive in the data collected by

HarassMap for their 2014 report. Frequent individual responses in the surveys conducted for this project included: *baṭālla* (unemployment), *t'alīm* (education), *ṭarbiyya* (socialization), *gāḥil* (ignorance), *mukhadarāt* (drugs), and the lack of *akhlāq* (principles) and *aman* (security) in society. In *byitharrash lih?*, HarassMap noted that sexual harassment is perpetrated not just by the poor but by the wealthy, and that teachers might equally be harassers along with those who cannot read. They, along with all of the independent initiatives and NGOs active in anti-sexual harassment work, have consistently framed sexual harassment as a phenomenon that is not bounded by social status and economic condition. Instead, anti-sexual harassment discourses frame sexual harassment as a widespread activity that many engage in, i.e., anyone can be a harasser, regardless of age, background, educational attainment, socioeconomic level, and profession. Moreover, it is argued that sexual harassment continues to persist because people refuse to see it for what it is, as a form of control over women's bodies. For this reason, society itself is responsible for allowing the problem to continue.

### *Creating Safe Spaces and Public Safety*

In September 2013, HarassMap unit directors held a series of meetings to discuss their new Safe Areas project. A parallel program, called Safe Schools and Universities, recently received UN Habitat funding and a pilot project was underway. Both would eventually be subsumed under a new unit called Safe Areas, but at the time there was no consensus on whether Safe Areas should be considered a project or an organization in and of itself. There was internally contentious sentiment about the scope of Safe Areas and the future of HarassMap, with Marketing and Communications particularly keen to

see the entire focus of HarassMap shift toward creating Safe Areas across Egypt. In the configuration proposed by the Marketing unit, large corporate entities, such as Vodafone or MobiNil, would be a critical driving force behind the idea of creating safe spaces or zones for women. Vodafone was especially attractive because it maintained small offices and kiosks all over the country and it was believed that corporate practices would filter down to all of the individual offices. However, all public entities, not just businesses but also government and private agencies, would be enjoined to participate.

There were two central facets of Safe Areas, including the creation of role models, or organizations that would take the lead on creating safe zones that other organizations would seek to emulate, and the creation of escalation policies that would generate some form of due process around sexual harassment complaints. As these facets were developed and laid out, the project plan became intricate and involved creating and hiring all new positions devoted to recruiting, monitoring, training and managing corporate Safe Areas. A dissenting view, largely coming from the Community Outreach unit, reflected a reticence to work within a corporate structure and desired to work at a more manageable level, although the overall ideas about role models and policies were not contested. In its early stages, the Community Outreach unit was already managing the Safe Areas project and had begun recruiting small business entities, such as kiosks and taxi drivers, with some talk about trying to work with the Ministry of Transportation to create safe spaces on public buses.

A twofold strategy evolved from this project. First, Community Outreach deployed its training technique to volunteers inside of schools and universities to build a corps of captains among teachers and administrators in the secondary schools and

students in the universities that would raise awareness among all students and their families. Second, they sought to recruit all of the business entities, including kiosks, restaurants, cafes, organizations, and doctors offices on a street-by-street basis to agree to speak up and ensure their locations were sexual harassment-free zones. Generating policies and due process around sexual harassment events when they occurred was critical. The Marketing and Communications unit, in conjunction with the Research unit, similarly began considering how HarassMap's Ushahidi map could be reconfigured to add additional layers that would show safe areas against the "hotspots" of sexual harassment. In theory, the idea behind this was that individuals would know where the safe spots were in an area rife with sexual harassment, where they could go in the event they experienced sexual harassment in that area, and that these individuals would patronize only the safe zones highlighted on the map.

As part of this effort, new campaign messaging was devised to frame and promote public safety and developing anti-sexual harassment policies. Image 9 below is one of four messages focused on public transportation, which was the most problematic public location for sexual harassment noted by the ECWR, UN Women and HarassMap studies. The background image depicts a set of stairways descending into Cairo's underground metro line, with the text reading, "3 million people ride the metro in Cairo everyday, 81.8% of sexual harassment occurs on public transportation like the metro and 82.3% of bystanders do not intervene to help a women being sexually harassed. Imagine how much better riding the metro would be if people fought back against sexual harassment?" The other messages encourage people riding public transportation to report sexual harassment and asked them to imagine how much sexual harassment occurred and whether they



Illustration 9: Safe Metro



Illustration 10: We Want a Policy

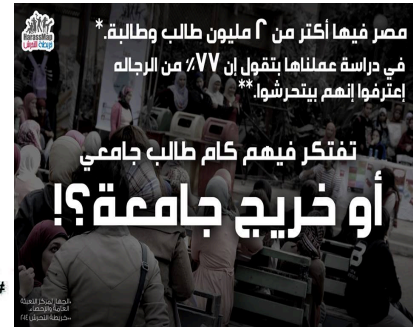


Illustration 11: Campus Sexual Harassment

considered themselves to be among the small percentage of people that did intervene. Images 10 and 11 are part of HarassMap's "*guwa el-gām'a*" (Inside the University) campaign, promoted by the Safe Areas/Safe Schools and Universities unit. Image 10 specifically highlights the drive to develop policies across all of Egypt's universities, already accomplished by Cairo University in 2014 following the sexual harassment incident highlighted in Chapter 2 at their College of Law. The four posters in Image 10 demand "*āyẓīn siyāsa ʔed el-taḥarrush*" (We Want a Policy Against Sexual Harassment), with the caricatures showing how teachers and students sexually harass while administrators deny that sexual harassment exists on campus. Image 11 is part of a small suite of messages that also underscore the breadth of the problem of sexual harassment inside of schools, stating, "Egypt has more than 2 million students. Our research says that 77% of men confess to sexually harassing. How many of those do you think are college students and graduates?" Additionally, the messages ask people to think and calculate how many students on college campuses and how many actual women are sexually harassed if the reported percentage of harassers and victims is so high.

While HarassMap is particularly vigorous in framing the importance of public safety, they are not alone in arguing that women have the right to walk unmolested in the street. Stories from activists and non-activists alike highlight how women are consistently made aware of their bodies in public and constantly feel uncomfortable by watching eyes. Discursive framing here seeks to make people see the fundamental humanity of women and to be concerned with transgressions against them.

### *Sexual Harassment as a Crime*

Raised at several points throughout this dissertation, an integral component of anti-sexual harassment discourses from the very beginning was encouraging the public to see sexual harassment as a “*garīma*,” or crime. Toward this end, the use of the term *taharrush ginsy* made it possible for activists and organizations to emphasize the violence inherent in acts deemed to be sexually harassing. The conceptual leap that violent acts should be criminalized was seemingly more logical and thought to be more palatable than the idea that flirtations could be crimes. Yet, there are differing views within Egyptian civil society with respect to how to advance the criminality of sexual harassment. Advocacy NGOs/groups typically lobby and work with the government to facilitate changing legal frameworks. This work is predicated on beliefs that legal change will trickle down to inform new ethical practices within society. To date, this strategy has been unsuccessful and the penal code structures remain largely unchanged, with one exception. A new amendment to Article 306 added *taharrush ginsy* to the legal framework, yet not in ways which satisfy women’s rights groups in Egypt since the amendment encapsulates sexual harassment within the problematic, historic system of honor and shame. Other groups, including the independent initiatives like HarassMap,

argue that changing the law does not necessarily lead to changing social perceptions. For this reason, HarassMap deploys messaging that specifically promotes that certain acts are *taḥarrush* and that *taḥarrush* is a crime. The *ṣallahha fī dimāghak* campaign, which had an online Twitter reach of 15 million individuals, attempted to make this connection, framing sexual harassment and all forms of sexual violence, as well as theft and violence, as criminal acts<sup>8</sup>. Other messaging also argued, “*el-taḥarrush garīma, malhāsh hāga*,” or sexual harassment is a crime and has no excuse. Moreover, community outreach teams similarly strive to advance this point when speaking to people in the street, discussed in Chapter 5.

One problem with a focus on changing social perceptions that does not include driving concomitant changes in the law is that the lack of prosecution might create a larger sense of impunity around the problem. There is a disjuncture in HarassMap’s rhetoric between encouraging people to see sexual harassment as a crime and believing that the law won’t change people’s perspectives. Without codifying the illegality or criminal nature of sexual harassment, which would result in punishment, groups like HarassMap face a problem in making people believe sexual harassment is a crime. It is not clear if anti-sexual harassment groups may be able to encourage people to see sexual harassment as a crime if the legal structure is such that people are not punished for it.

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<sup>8</sup> Through the advice of a technology expert at Nazra for Feminist Studies, HarassMap ran analytics for the hashtag *#ṣallahhaXdimāghak* using the online software, Topsy. Focused primarily on Twitter since software for Facebook analytics was not as readily accessible, the analysis report showed the circulation of tweets and retweets containing this hashtag, with an exposure of almost 15 million. Much of the Twitter activity was located in Saudi Arabia, followed by Egypt and then the United States. What was not clear to HarassMap staff, however, was what “exposure” necessarily meant since there was no ability to assess how Twitter followers were internalizing campaign messaging.





Illustration 12: “Don’t be an Antenna”

*Don’t be an Antenna: Intervene!*

HarassMap maintains that intervention and speaking up is the key to social change. Building a new ethic around what constitutes sexual harassment and in the nature of people’s social responsibility to members of their community, underpins their philosophical approach to ending sexual harassment as a problem in Egypt. Their rhetoric,

messaging and outreach campaigns are geared toward two issues: 1) asking people to take a stand against sexual harassment and to provide assistance when witnessing a woman being sexually harassed; and 2) asking women themselves to not remain silent but to speak up about their experiences and to make it known that sexual harassment is unwanted and has real consequences. Image 12 offers insight into how HarassMap views the bystander effect. Though the image itself was not created by HarassMap, they actively circulated the poster, with the caption reading, “*māṭbaqāsh erīyāl*,” or don’t be an antenna, showing a woman walking past a bystander has her bottom grabbed by a man depicted as a pig. The bystander stares lazily into space while the sexual harassment incident is happening behind him. The antenna on his head reflects the bystander’s distraction, his state of being “spaced out” and not paying attention to what is occurring almost under his own nose, much in the way that television can serve as a distraction

from the realities of everyday life. A frequent refrain individuals offer is that they were unaware of sexual harassment happening around them. The visual cue to people here is to pay attention to what others are doing and to be proactive in saying something to stop sexual harassment when it occurs. According to HarassMap staff, one of their primary goals is making the act of speaking up the new norm, so that harassers will know that it is not an acceptable practice.

### **Techniques of Framing New Norms of Sexual Harassment**

Framing practices and the construction of new discourses or norms are prominent aspects of analyses on how social movements facilitate social change, as well as diffusion processes from international to local fields. Movements, NGOs, initiatives and activists all play a role in mediating new norms, moving circuitously between various entities at multiple levels as they do so. These individuals and organizations at once build on and challenge historic values and beliefs as they devise new, or even hybrid or composite, ways of conceptualizing social problems, and as they formulate new ethical practices designed to drive particular agendas. A fundamental precept underpinning framing practices is that new frames or the norms they advance must be resonant in order to find salience within the population (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). In other words, new discourses and norms must be grounded in local values, to some undefined extent, in order for those practices to have any persuasive impact in changing social perceptions, beliefs and practices. Resonant discourses alone do not necessarily result in successful social change. More radical and less resonant frames that disrupt local values have been argued by some to be more effective in eliminating problematic ideological structures,

whereas resonant frames may simply reproduce the problem (Feree 2003). Scholars note that resonance and radicalism are not mutually exclusive and that mediators frequently move between these practices as they seek to bring about change. This chapter offers insights into the way in which anti-sexual harassment organizations actively move between both resonant and radical approaches. However, it argues that there are very specific techniques by which this is done. The next section defines more clearly some of these techniques, which include processes of association, mythologizing, and rationalization that seek to make people believe in both the reality of sexual harassment and the necessity of ending the phenomenon.

#### *Associative Framing: Aligning Old and New Norms*

One method of constructing discourses or problems is through a technique referred to as associative framing, where connections and relationships are built between conceptually disparate ideas. According to Von Atteveldt et al. (2006), in associative framing the salience around one concept, or network of concepts, is transferred to another concept in order to sway public opinions and perceptions in particular ways to meet specific agendas. Research on associative framing has primarily occurred within media and communications, notably around mass media but also print media, where scholars explore how media has allowed various entities to position themselves or world events in ways that effectively channel or deflect blame for a set of catastrophic or alarming global occurrences. For instance, associative frames deployed via media contribute to a widespread conflation of terrorism with Islam, where a high proportion of the public, most especially in the Western world, now sees Muslims as terrorists (Von Atteveldt et

al. 2006). Through associative frames, global terror events are shown to have local effects, with discourses in places like London and Madrid framed within the context of the 9/11 attacks and the US-led War on Terror (Ruigrok and Von Atteveldt 2007). Moreover, Schultz et al. (2012) argued that concepts incorporated into associative frames are strategically selected and, often, are asymmetrical in salience. The actual public adoption of associations, therefore, is conditional. The authors exemplified this conditionality with a study of the British Petroleum (BP) oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, where BP framed the crisis in ways that set blame on factors external to the corporation, thereby disassociating themselves from the problem. The authors argued that US and UK news differentially aligned their frames with that of BP's based on different reporting agendas.

In addition to concepts and events, this chapter argues that associative framing in the case of the anti-sexual harassment movement also extends to social values.

Establishing the criminality of sexual harassment in Egypt is, in part, approached through techniques of associating bodily violation with that of property theft. An example of this was discussed in Chapter 3, where the staff at the HarassMap Academy employed performance to highlight how police and bystanders viewed theft as a more serious offense than sexual harassment. In the workshop, the example of theft was designed to encourage the



Illustration 13: “Stealing Wallets/Bodies”

volunteers to see sexual harassment as an equally criminal act, though activists believed sexual violence to be far more detrimental than theft. Communities regularly intervened to capture, beat and force thieves to police stations. HarassMap sought to transfer such interventionist actions to the crime of sexual harassment and to press people to treat harassers like thieves. In the *ṣallaḥha fī dimāghak* campaign, this association with theft was similarly deployed, as visible in Image 13. The top of the image notes “He who pickpockets/steals your wallet is a criminal” and in the bottom, “He who pickpockets/steals your body and rapes your smile is a criminal.” Additionally, the text notes that it is possible to forgive the crime of stealing a wallet, but there is never a possibility of forgiving sexual harassment, assault and rape and that these acts of sexual violence are crimes against humanity.

Two sets of negative practices are associated in this example in order to establish an equivalency between them and to influence people to see sexual harassment as a crime. HarassMap staff also intended to create positive frame associations with speaking up and overcoming the bystander effect in an, as of yet, unreleased campaign called “Through the Line” that was in the planning stages during the course of participant observation for this project. As explained by the former Marketing and Communications Director at HarassMap, one of the goals behind Through the Line was to employ different levels of media, both above (mass media) and below (niche media) the line, in order to reach people more broadly at varying levels of society. The focus group sessions that were organized through the marketing research firm centered on eliciting popular conceptions of important values that all Egyptians held in common, reasons that prevented people from intervening, and factors that would eventually induce them to

intervene. Through the insights generated from these focus groups, the intent was to link speaking up with important social values, such as *shahāma* (magnanimity) and *ged'ana* (being upright), and to create a sense of it being “cool” to intervene. This positive approach also represented moves that HarassMap wanted to make in facilitating constructive social change that, in essence, did not alienate people and made them feel good for contributing to ending sexual harassment.

Despite these attempts, the problem with such associative framing techniques is the conditionality around the salience of sexual harassment as a concept. Such framing practices are dependent on a more cohesively understood notion of sexual harassment in Egypt. Instead, definitions are contested and aspects of the phenomenon are still largely denied. Public conceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment do not yet (more expansively) align with those of civil society entities seeking to create change.

### *Mythologizing Local Knowledge*

The notion of mythmaking and its role in framing identities (including national and ethnic identities) and discourses is abundantly covered in anthropological analyses. It is not the goal here to canvass these theories in great detail but to highlight a few key ideas. Myths offer schemata through which people are able to understand, or imagine, the world around them and to order social practice. “Myths contain lessons –whether made explicitly as morality tales, or implicitly by portraying the universe of the exceptional and the commonsensical. The connections they draw and the precedents they supply serve as templates for action, structures for interpretation, and modes of negotiation” (Brown 2004). In his examination of the relation of myth to political discourse, Brown (2004)

noted how American discourses regarding intervention during the First Gulf War were rhetorically similar to justifications of intervention in Europe during the Second World War. This rhetoric drew on prevailing national myths around the nature of American strength, values and manifest destiny (Brown 2004: 29). The state was able to draw on mythic national values to advance specific political agendas. Yet, Chock (1991) argued that myths may reinforce inequality, even while they seemingly promote the opposite, by framing social status as an individual problem that ignores structural discrimination. She argues this is evident in the body of myths surrounding illegal immigrants in the US. Moreover, myths serve as legends or stories that help people to mitigate risk in dangerous situations (Roche et al. 2005).

Engaging with this theoretical framework, anti-sexual harassment organizations, particularly HarassMap, actively mythologize normative sentiments around sexual harassment in order to advance opposing claims. Mythologizing involves promoting long held ideas as myths that do not accurately reflect the situation they are intended to explain. The *byitharrash lih?* campaign, which HarassMap interchangeably calls “Myths” or “Debunking Myths” in English, provides insight into this process of mythologizing. Accordingly, HarassMap argues that the widespread denial and silence around sexual harassment is predicated on a set of, what they call, stereotypes. These stereotypes revolve around deteriorating economic conditions and include myths around unemployment, poverty, delayed marriage, and illiteracy. Additionally, they are built on patriarchal structures that order gender in particular ways and that seek to protect women from potentially dangerous gendered interactions in public, which is visible in victim blaming rhetoric designed to shame women into compliance with the status quo. A

popularly repeated sentiment regarding the existence of sexual harassment is that men cannot find work, have no money, and cannot get married. The connection between work, marriage and sex is rooted in deeply held norms that privilege marriage as the only acceptable outlet for sexual relations, where marital practices require men to attain a certain level of economic livelihood to support a wife and family. It is also more generally rooted in mythic beliefs about the nature of sexuality, where male sexuality must find release and female sexuality must be contained. In the reverse, the containment of male sexuality and release of female sexuality only leads to social chaos, where “maleness” and paternity would both come into question. Within this mythic structure, sexual harassment is not a social problem, but the necessary and unproblematic maintenance of the social order.

However, from the HarassMap perspective, these stereotypes elide more direct judgments of the underlying problem of sexual harassment, and therefore reinforce patriarchal inequalities by offering peripheral logics that support male power and control over female bodies. Their argument claims that the problem of sexual harassment is not rooted in economic deterioration and that there is no natural connection between sexual harassment and sex, *per se*. Drawing on feminist critiques present in the global Violence Against Women movement, HarassMap argues that sexual harassment is about control and that it exists because no one challenges the basis of this control by speaking up. The numerous campaigns and messages that HarassMap creates attempts to challenge these myths, arguing that delayed marriage, and therefore the lack of sexual relations, cannot be the reason for sexual harassment because fathers harass, and that poverty and the lack of money cannot be the reason because company directors harass. HarassMap posters



further illustrate the belief that people “play stupid” by ignoring why sexual harassment really happens, and that ignoring it will not make the problem go away.

*Rational Framing: Data and Creating New Empirical Realities*

The data revolution and the globalized focus on utilizing large amounts of data, or “Big Data,” to provide insights into human behavior has been growing since, at least, 2006 with the advent of interactive web technologies that make possible the collection of vast amounts of information by technologically-oriented activists and organizations seeking development change (Curran 2013; Howe 2006). Data, both in its narrative and statistical form, provide some apparent measure of an empirical reality that activists believe will better allow them to advance a variety of claims. Local narratives serve as important features of building coherent frames that orient problems in particular ways (Labov 1972; Johnstone 2004). With respect to sexual harassment, eliciting such narratives are all the more important given that they have historically not existed or have been suppressed, therefore new narratives obtained through technological means offer counter-perspectives to dominant norms (Clair 2009).

Concomitant with narrative approaches, Chang and Lee (2010) argue that statistical frames, at least in the case of promoting charitable causes, are especially salient in driving an agenda, more so when the denominators in an expressed set of ratios are large. The reason for this, they claim, is that the “base rate neglect” phenomenon tends to make people dismiss smaller denominators. Problems seem magnified when denominators are large. Using death rates as an example, the authors notes that death rates expressed as 24/100 (24 percent), while actually more serious, looks less so against

a larger sample of 1286/10,000 (13 percent) (Chang and Lee 2010: 201). Data in both forms serves as a powerful tool in the negotiation of perceived truth around a problem. Ursa (1993) discusses how testimonies and numbers create “reality-effects,” serving as “authoritative facts” that allow people to “make themselves visible, make claims upon the state, and to describe who they are to themselves and to society” (Ursa 1993: 836.)

Such forms of rational framing have been visible in anti-sexual harassment work from the very beginning. At the outset of ECWR’s campaign, when volunteers were collecting surveys and then later when ECWR was able to hire a research team, the crucial question they faced was how to portray sexual harassment in ways that effectively changed how the public understood the concept. According to Nehad Aboul Qomsan, “I am not a scientific social researcher, but I told them from a policy review do not talk to me about research with less than three numbers as a sample, three zeros. Less than 1000 and I will not accept talking about this, because I understand how the media will receive it...you can kill the whole campaign in the beginning with a bad approach.” She went on to note that in order to convince people that sexual harassment was a real problem it was critical to demonstrate that there were large numbers of victims reporting it as such. Their 2008 study, which included a sample of 3000 surveys, generated the first set of statistics that highlighted how many women suffered from sexual harassment, what forms of sexual harassment were most prevalent, the most common locations where sexual harassment occurred, and the characteristics of those that experienced sexual harassment.

In 2013 UN Women and in 2014 HarassMap repeated this study. All three contributed to a new narrative that high numbers of women reported being harassed, that touching and unwelcome comments were overwhelmingly what women identified as

problems, and that public transportation was where women faced the most harassment, which led ECWR to conclude that workplace sexual harassment in Egypt was not as prevalent as transportation sexual harassment. The need for strong statistical evidence to establish the veracity of the claim that sexual harassment was a problem found relevance in a 2014 press conference held at Nazra for Feminist Studies. There, a reporter for *Gumhuriyya* (Republic) Newspaper questioned that sexual harassment was as widespread as anti-sexual harassment organizations were claiming. During the second Revolution of June 30, 2013, when Mohamed Morsi was deposed, anti-sexual harassment initiatives, like Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment (OpAntish) and HarassMap, reported that 186 women were assaulted and raped in Tahrir Square. The reporter noted that in a country of 80 million people, 186 individuals seemed fairly small to be an epidemic. A founding member of OpAntish responded to this by stating that there were 186 documented attacks in a single week only, with many more likely undocumented and many more that occurred prior to and after the deposal of Morsi.

In addition to the statistical studies, narrative accounts and testimonies are also viewed as fundamental in establishing the seriousness of sexual harassment as a problem facing women in the public space. When HarassMap launched in late 2010, they did so first around their online Ushahidi crowdmapping platform that allowed members of the public to anonymously report their stories online. The online platform was believed to offer women a forum in which to detail their accounts of sexual harassment, and in some cases assault and even rape, without fear of reprisal from kin and community. In so doing, the map was intended not only to highlight “hotspots” but to build an evidence base for the public to witness (referred to as crowdfearing, where crowdsourced data is

circulated back into the crowd). The growing problems with Ushahidi maintenance, as well as internal ideological differences concerning the uses of crowdsourcing, eventually changed how much HarassMap promoted their map, and therefore, public use of the platform. Nonetheless, by late 2013, when the HarassMap crowdsourcing research began there were 1200 stories. Nazra for Feminist Studies and El-Nadim Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture also collect testimonies of survivors of violence, often publishing them in print. In addition, Facebook and Twitter offer online space with broader reach than crowdsourcing for individuals to submit their stories. Yet, some of the messaging campaigns designed between 2012 and 2014 were done so in order to spread the word about the Ushahidi map. In particular, *mesh sākta* and the transportation campaign highlighted the need for both victims of sexual harassment and bystanders to speak up and let their voices be heard, with the HarassMap SMS shortcode and websites as avenues for doing so (and not the police). The transportation and “*guwa el-gām ‘a’*” campaigns bolstered this need to speak up by highlighting additional statistical realities, including the vast numbers of people both using transportation and going to school that suffered sexual harassment everyday.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented data on salient frames and framing techniques in anti-sexual harassment activism. Activists discursively produced the problem of sexual harassment and generated a body of rhetoric designed to elicit new social perceptions that it was a real phenomenon and a criminal act. Within a transnationally-inspired field of activism, various frames positioned sexual harassment as a form of violence that was

unwanted and violated women's bodily rights. Moreover, prevailing excuses commonly proffered to dismiss the practice were challenged, with activists and organizations arguing that the existence of sexual harassment was ultimately grounded in societal attitudes that made it permissible. Here, victim blaming and other stereotypes simply gave harassers a pass to continue to objectify and control women's bodies and sexuality in the public space. Within this framework, male sexuality, rather than that of women, was inversely, though contentiously, portrayed as uncontrollable and animalistic. In addition to the actual frames, techniques of framing have similarly encouraged new attitudes and beliefs by associating sexual harassment with the criminality extant in theft, turning old norms into a system of myths with little basis in reality, and by employing data and narratives to generate a new reality underpinned by women's lived experiences. Through these discursive practices, anti-sexual harassment activism has devised new normative structures that have sought an end to the social acceptability of sexual harassment and the creation of more equitable spaces for women in public.

## CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF MOBILIZING BYSTANDERS

“Although we have deep faith that sexual harassment is a crime, we also believe that there is no magical solution for sexual harassment. One way to change prevailing perceptions that have made sexual harassment acceptable and to reject it is to work together as a community, where each of us: 1) is vigilant and aware of the existence of sexual harassment in our community, and 2) do not remain silent that sexual harassment is a crime and to reject it as part of our community...”  
(Translated by this Author from HarassMap Community Outreach Training Manual)

June 8, 2014 marked inauguration day for Egypt’s newly elected president, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. The day included public celebrations, with thousands, if not millions according to a Ministry of Interior spokesperson, flooding into Tahrir Square to express their support for the former field marshal (New York Times 2014). In a scene reminiscent of the days of revolutionary protest in Tahrir, a mobile-phone video was released via YouTube the following day showing the collective sexual assault of a woman whose naked body was visibly beaten and bruised. On this same day, a joint statement was coordinated and released by the feminist group Nazra for Feminist Studies (Nazra 2014). The statement denounced recent amendments on sexual violence in the penal code as ineffective, including the passage of a new sexual harassment law. It noted that more than 250 cases of collective sexual harassment, assaults and rapes had taken place between November 2012 and January 2014 and that 9 were recorded on Sisi’s inauguration day. Moreover, the joint statement called for comprehensive legal reform and the creation of a national strategy inclusive of all institutions of government to eradicate sexual violence and guarantee women’s safety in public. HarassMap was among the twenty-two human and women’s rights groups listed as signatory to the statement.

The decision by HarassMap staff members to sign the joint statement was the source of continued discussions in the weeks to follow. When the press statement

circulated among activist groups on January 9, they were given a 2-hour window to respond. In general, HarassMap staff were supportive of elements of the statement that addressed the insufficiencies in the new amendment to the penal code, Article 306a and Article 306 (bis)b, for the way it narrowly defined sexual harassment. Yet, there were also concerns raised about the overly critical nature of the statement toward state entities, joining a call for a national strategy, where blame should be placed for the phenomenon of sexual harassment and what this meant for the nature of their activism, which was largely centered within the community and on combating what they saw as the social acceptability of sexual harassment. As the co-founders and staff discussed the appropriateness of HarassMap signing the statement, they decidedly wanted to avoid language that placed blame on the state for inciting the sexual violence that had unfolded at any point during protests and celebrations in Tahrir, even if they approved language that placed blame on the police and security forces for their failure to stop such violence<sup>9</sup>.

On Sunday, January 15, a week following the release of the statement, HarassMap staff participated in a joint press conference held at Nazra's office in Garden City, alongside members of Nazra, El-Nadeem Center, Tahrir Bodyguard and OpAntish on the issue of sexual violence in public space and the role of the law and state institutions in combating the violence. HarassMap's part in this press conference was to speak more about the everyday forms of sexual harassment women experienced in the street and

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<sup>9</sup> The joint statement does not blame state entities for instigating the sexual violence that took place in Tahrir, but it was suggested by one HarassMap staff member that perhaps it should. This prompted a discussion about avoiding blaming the state directly for sexual harassment. In a personal conversation with Engy Ghozlan, she noted that while some activists had a sense that state actors were implicated in commissioning violence, there was no proof to suggest this and she was wary of supporting unverified claims. As a founding member of OpAntish, she mentioned the many stories of OpAntish members of average men "who had nothing to do with it" stopping what they were doing and joining into mobs that would form around a single woman.

public space. A week after this on Sunday, January 22, HarassMap held a dissemination conference for the release of a study on the effectiveness of crowdsourced data on understanding sexual harassment, in which a number of government officials were invited as guests and participants. This included representatives from the Ministry of Justice, who ultimately did not appear that day, along with individuals from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the National Council for Women.

Around this series of events that unfolded over a two week period, various staff members at HarassMap debated how political their work should be, whether this meant simply signing onto joint statements with civil society colleagues or developing a more active political position with respect to state responsibility on the issue of sexual harassment. On the one hand, there were concerns that failing to take a more political stance would result in “bland” messaging and, to some extent, a lack of enthusiasm among staff and within volunteer pools for the work. There were also concerns that by failing to be more political civil society colleagues would begin to see them as colluding with state entities. This was exemplified at the dissemination conference where a discussion occurred between the then-deputy executive director (now executive director) of HarassMap, Reem Wael, and HarassMap’s Digital Marketing manager and founder of Ded el-Taharrush, Ayman Nagy, about involvement with state agencies and whether it presented an opportunity to effect change from “within the system.” From Nagy’s perspective, working from “within” was not the solution because the state had a history of coopting movements. He was adamant that Ded el-Taharrush would never become involved with the National Council for Women or any of the Ministries in any capacity.



HarassMap's director of community outreach, Hussein el-Shafei, echoed some of Nagy's sentiments. He desired a more politically active stance on sexual harassment and gender violence. Yet, like Nagy he was wary of collaborating with state institutions or being seen as too close to them. At the same time, he was concerned about being "caught in the middle" of colleagues who wanted or did not want them to be more political. For him, this included a general wariness of being swayed into the political arena by NGO partners upset by HarassMap's seeming lack of political engagement, which he felt should not influence the decisions HarassMap made with respect to its work.

This example highlights a tension that exists among activists, visible also in academic analyses of civil society activism, in what constitutes the nature of "political" engagement and how sociopolitical change might be effected. Here, the political largely references some form of engagement with state institutions, often expressed in lobbying and advocacy activities prevalent among NGOs. Unstated but visible in the above example is the notion that social change requires a change in state level practices or policies, which can only be effected through direct confrontation with corrupt state practices. The state, therefore, serves as the pivot point around which new norms and values must first occur which then, presumably, filters down to society in a top-down flow of change. Mobilization, therefore, becomes a tactic through which civil society organizations seek to build consensus and challenge problematic state practices.

Analyses of mobilization in pre-and-post Revolution Egypt more often than not centers on challenges to exclusionary state practices and oppressive political conditions that constrain democratic life ways and undermine some conception of human and women's rights. Missing in much of this analyses is a broader understanding of what

constitutes the “political,” where community-based activism that that does not target the state and, instead, seeks to mobilize people against problematic social norms has been viewed as depoliticizing. Such analyses fail to address how community mobilization against discriminatory social norms or practices may effect change in state institutions. Rather, given the repressive political context, scholars have been interested in how people negotiate free space, political influence and new opportunities for themselves within structures designed to limit avenues for greater participation in governance, or even public, spheres. Scholars of Egypt have long theorized how corporatist state practices hinder (but do not eliminate) the possibilities for widespread public mobilization and public engagement (Al-Sayyid 1993; Bianchi 1989; Owen 1994). The state immobilizes dissent by building elite allies in various sectors who direct sector-member sentiments, or at least voting behavior, in return for state protection of their interests.

Particularly since the advent of liberalization, corporatism is recognized as a process through which state institutions attempt to control labor and forestall the kinds of worker protests that undermine state legitimacy. Yet, worker protests and strikes were common through the 1980’s - 2000’s, numbering in the thousands. While many worker protests centered on industry reforms following declines in employment opportunities that accompanied structural adjustment, they were also politically oriented, especially in the years immediately preceding the Revolution (Beinen & El-Hamalawy 2007; Clement 2006). Visible in the April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008 protest, worker demands shifted to include “...the elimination of government corruption, and end to police torture and arbitrary detainment, and the creation of a fair judiciary system (Ottaway & Hamzawy 2011). The April 6<sup>th</sup> movement, which incited the labor protest, also became a driving force behind the

Revolution, helping to mobilize the mass protest that brought down the Mubarak regime (El-Tantaway & Wiest 2011; Lim 2012).

In addition to labor, analyses of mobilization tend to focus on state opposition from Islamist movements. Scholars have explored how such movements, specifically their non-militant forms, offer “low-risk” opportunities for engagement and how they actively build their constituent base by providing the kinds of services the state was forced to cut back on under liberalization (Wickham 2002). As a contender for political power, state responses to the mobilizational power of Islamist entities, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, involves vacillating instances of limited inclusion in the political process and repressive measures that include illegalization, detention and even torture of key movement activists (Albreth & Wegner 2006). The mobilization of women is also often explored in relation to efforts at increasing their political participation and inclusion in formal political spheres with running campaigns, changing discriminatory laws, and voting, in addition to exploring the differences in religious and secular activism on mobilizing support for women’s movements (Al-Ali 2002; Blaydes and El-Tarouty 2009; El-Mahdi 2010). The role of digital activism and online platforms in facilitating the mobilization of protest has also generated a growing corpus of research, with many arguing that new social media networking sites serve as both spaces and tools through which individuals are able to connect with each other, plan and organize dissent (Aouragh and Alexander 2011). April 6<sup>th</sup> and Kefaya were noted for their use of social media and YouTube in calling the public to protest, though they were long involved in fostering public dissent to corrupt state practices (Khoury 2014; Lim 2012). This contrasts with other forms of state-controlled media, in particular mass media such as

television, which Abu Lughod (2005) argues is intimately connected to the project of creating, and not contesting, national identity.

This discussion provides a very brief glimpse into a complex and nuanced set of analyses in which dissent from corrupt state practices is scrutinized via party politics, social/economic/political protest, labor/religious/youth/women's movements, and information and communication technologies. It attempts to minimally highlight how studies on mobilization and social movements in Egypt largely look at the political with the objective of understanding challenges to the state, centering on top-down forms of democratic change (Rizzo 2012). Within this body of knowledge, political institutions, the economy, and religion serve as important potential loci for change. Few, if any, studies in Egypt explore the community, or the street, as a critical site for sociopolitical change. Analyses have not addressed how and why movements choose to avoid directly target the political establishment. Underpinning the choice to eschew the state as a target for change, many community-based anti-sexual harassment initiatives in Egypt are concerned that amended state or legal practices do not trickle down to the populace and generate widespread shifts in perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, community-based activists are wary that, even if the law can change behavior by penalizing people for non-compliance, the likelihood exists that the public might develop forms of resistance to the law to continually reproduce inequitable practices, particularly if people don't believe in the laws that exist. Few studies interrogate the efficacy of Egyptian activism that looks toward community members themselves as the solution to the problems afflicting society, without the need for concomitant political and legal adjustments. As evident in anti-sexual harassment activism, community mobilization

tackles the issue of political change only peripherally, as the eventual outcome of expansive changes in normative social perceptions and behaviors. The more immediate goal of this activism is broad-based societal change, which would only later trickle up.

This chapter explores community mobilization and bottom-up grassroots change. It argues that independent initiatives active in anti-sexual harassment work, such as HarassMap, are engaged in mobilizing for change inside of communities, at the level of the street, and that their work of changing social perceptions and behavior represents a political process with long term political effects, even if they do not have direct political targets. The next sections of this chapter explore the notion of the political and why the point that community mobilization serves as a political act is critical, in light of criticisms that social interventions in anti-sexual harassment activism are somehow depoliticizing. It then illustrates how anti-sexual harassment activists have attempted to mobilize for change, specifically examining theory and praxis concerning bystander approaches, with HarassMap as its primary case study. It then further considers what motivates people to both change and to facilitate change, drawing on surveys of initiative volunteers and discussing challenges to the bystander approach in building a critical mass.

### **Decentering the Political: The Cultural Politics of Social Transformations**

Studies of social movements, community organizing, and grassroots mobilization began to proliferate in the 1970's, at a time when such movements were a growing form of engagement for many of the world's disenfranchised, in both developed and underdeveloped contexts. Within the development framework, social movements, NGOs, and grassroots solutions to problems were argued to be possible alternatives to top-down

technocratic forms of change that frustratingly seemed to reproduce inequality and poverty (Escobar 1995). Across disciplines, a wide body of research has developed that looks at varying conditions giving rise to social movements and making social activism possible, including political opportunities/process and resource mobilization, power and resistance, identity and representation, and culture and politics (Alvarez et al. 1998; Edelman 2001; Fisher & Kling 1993). Varying theoretical frameworks that engage with Foucauldian, Weberian and Gramscian-inspired notions of power, inequality and hegemony are frequently deployed to examine the nature of state and community, and intra-community, interactions. Power, in its postmodern configuration, is viewed as more dispersed, as exercised or performed, and not as something held by particular groups or individuals, while movements are seen as embedded in multiple, overlapping relations of power (Armstrong & Bernstein 2008; Swidler 1995). Culture, as “socially organized practices,” is also increasingly vital in understanding how grassroots movements are able to transform society, where “The agendas of many social movements revolve around... cultural recordings. Indeed, since most movements lack political power...they can shape the world more effectively through redefining its terms rather than rearranging its sanctions” (Swidler 1995: 31 & 34).

In many analyses of community-based, grassroots movements, culture has been deployed as an almost reified assemblage of practices and symbols that guide behavior and is positioned in parallel, or opposition, to the political sphere. With the postmodern turn, culture, long viewed as peripheral to politics, took on a more primary role in disrupting the notion of power as consolidated solely in the political realm and also that “...cultural practices, categories, and rules are enactments of power...,” (Swidler 1995:

30). Thus, it is a powerful analytic tool in many analyses for understanding more complex negotiations with respect to sociopolitical change. As a set of codes that influences perceptions and behaviors, culture might be recoded in new ways. Yet, political institutions still tend to serve as anchors around which cultural practices are recoded or negotiated, as they provide both constraints and opportunities for movement operations (Swidler 1995). While new conceptions of power have afforded more agency to individuals and have recognized cultural negotiation as critical to social transformations, a fissure between culture and politics still exists in these analyses. Political spheres are still not viewed as a domain of cultural negotiation but in reverse, that political institutions guide or constrain cultural negotiations and are, somehow, outside of the cultural negotiation process. Concomitantly, cultural negotiations are also typically not viewed as political acts or processes.

Moreover, these analyses often privilege the material, or the tangible and seemingly real, conditions of change, limiting what constitutes the political and political engagement (Alvarez et al. 1998). The narrow focus on the politics of movements directs analyses toward and positions the locus of change at institutionalized levels, where change may be witnessed and comparatively measured. Expanding the focus to the “cultural politics” of movements, however, offers the potential for drawing more expansive conclusions about the nature of social change that decenters how politics and the political are understood. A cultural politics approach makes possible an interrogation of the relationship between culture and politics, where cultural politics represents the struggle over power, meaning, identity and practices, and where culture is seen as inherently political “...because meanings are always constitutive of processes that

implicitly or explicitly, seek to redefine social power” (Alvarez et al. 1998: 7). While, this theoretical framework recognizes a formally defined political sphere consisting of directive and managing institutions, politics itself is understood as the overall negotiation of meaning that influences the shape of both the societal and political spheres.

Turning to scholarly analyses of Egyptian movements and NGOs, a highly “state-centered or center-centered notion of politics” is visible, which does not fully explore the integrated nature of cultural and political power in the country. Power is implicitly treated as “...as something that is amassed and brokered at the center among explicitly political actors” (Rubin 1996: 88). Analyses focus on brokerage, or mediation and translation, as it occurs around political institutions, which admittedly are involved in defining and constraining the scope of people’s activism. The new meanings that many movements and NGOs seek to promote with respect to human and women’s rights are also, in part, influenced by institutional practices and movements that are geared toward direct state engagement in order to change the political, or more precisely institutional, culture. Yet, the work of reshaping culture, in which community-based anti-sexual harassment entities are engaged, is not viewed as part of this effort at reshaping political culture, nor is it postulated as a political act. Instead, institutional change is divorced from larger cultural changes, which Rubin views as problematic because “...the state apparatus is the ‘institutional crystallization’ ...of something that happens elsewhere, in multiple local sites of contestation, such as workplaces, families, associational groups, and institutions...” (1996: 89, citing Foucault 1990: 93-96). Rubin indicates that “cultural” contestations are, in fact, political negotiations and that formalized political or institutional practices are themselves the outcomes of this process of cultural negotiation,



not vice versa. Exploring bottom-up rather than top-down change and recognizing people as key to social transformations, which later become institutionalized and codified in political and legal culture is, therefore, critical.

With this in mind, it is important to (re)consider the nature of political engagement of anti-sexual harassment work focused on social change at the community or street levels. Chapter 2 discussed concerns around such work, particularly that of ECWR, highlighting criticism of its' depoliticizing nature or effects. Community-based efforts were argued to be failing in the need to address structural gender inequality, in which the state is a key transgressor against women's respectability and bodily integrity (Amar 2011). Moreover, social interventions were believed to contribute to the demonization of men as a class and to result in problematic public responses that only served to reproduce gender inequality, such as sentiments that the best approach to mitigating sexual harassment is to enforce stricter regulations on women that limit their participation in the public sphere (Abu Lughod 2010; Tadros 2013). Such arguments rest on distinctions that the political and cultural are two distinct realms, where political negotiations are more intimately tied to shifting institutional culture and practice. Recently, however, street-based activism has been argued to be central in fomenting social and political change.

The street itself is increasingly viewed as a political arena and a site for the active vertical and horizontal negotiation of acceptable values and practices (Bayat 2010). Bayat's notion of the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary," centered on poor people's movements, underscores the way in which people themselves are "actors in the making," or bystander who can be mobilized toward the solution of a variety of sociopolitical

problems (1997:158). Centered on “non-movements” and those who are “non-ideologically driven,” Bayat’s theorizing positions social movements as those groups who seek to “mobilize the constituencies to put pressure on authorities to meet their demands” (2010: 19). Yet, he also defines quiet encroachment as the action oriented politics of practice of those living what it is they espouse. This notion aligns with the work of non-NGOized social initiatives, who are similarly action-oriented and whose work is a politics of practice, focused on refashioning the nature of social responsibility rather than state practice. As also argued by Ahmad (2014), the “politics of staying out of politics” does not imply that people are divorced from political sentiment or engagement, and that new socialities of indignation and outrage are equally as influential in sociopolitical processes. It is possible to evince new sentiments among broad swaths of bystander, who, in turn, can be incited into particular forms of action, not all of which will necessarily target the state or fall within the realm of political culture, but that still create change across the social and political spheres.

### **Bystanders, Critical Mass, and Tipping Point: Theoretical Considerations**

The primary target of HarassMap’s outreach and activism is bystanders, and ending the “bystanding effect” has been central to their community outreach work, in the streets and within schools and universities. In April 2014, an internal staff development workshop was held to explore the bystander effect and corollary notions of critical mass and tipping point, lead by then Operations Manager for Safe Areas and Safe Schools and Universities, Miriam Freudenberg. On a Sunday afternoon, staff members gathered in the reception hall of HarassMap’s new office in the neighborhood of Maadi for the 4-hour

session titled “The Tipping Point and Other Theories of Social Change.” At the outset of the session, Freudenberg opened by asking every team member if they were bystanders and to recall the last time they saw something happen where they did not intervene or respond. A spattering of examples were provided that did not revolve around intervening in cases of sexual harassment, but other common, every day events in Cairo streets involving the homeless and street children. Freudenberg followed this by then asking everyone to provide explanations of why they did not intervene to help and why they were, in fact, bystanders themselves. Responses to this ranged from feelings of anxiety that their interventions would not ultimately help to the recognition that certain problems were so commonly observed that it was second nature to ignore them. This served as her point of departure to explore what the bystander effect was and its underlying causes.

From here, Freudenberg juxtaposed two critical scenarios that highlighted the deep ramifications of non-intervention. The first involved the infamous Kitty Genovese case of the early 1960’s, which became widely iconic in social psychological research on the bystander effect. Genovese, who lived and worked as a waitress in New York, was returning home late one evening when she was attacked, raped and stabbed to death in an alleyway. As she was being attacked and raped, 38 individuals that lived in the buildings along the alley – bystanders – supposedly reported hearing Genovese’s screams. The newspapers at the time claimed the witnesses watched while the killer attacked and killed Genovese (Manning et al. 2007). It was reported that none of these bystanders intervened to save Genovese or called the police for help. Manning et al. (2007) questioned what they argue is now a parable around these witnesses, and that the facts have become somewhat distorted with respect to what the bystanders actually saw or understood to be

happening. Despite this, the original case when it arose spawned a great deal of research around this phenomenon, which has since been documented in numerous experiments. The second scenario was graphic imagery of the lynching of African Americans in the American south prior to the Civil Rights Movement. African Americans were shown hung from trees surrounded by cloaked members of the KKK, which was a widespread phenomenon across the south that many did nothing about. Here, the two scenarios together highlighted how both gender and race served as dehumanizing factors that made non-intervention possible among the public.

With these examples in mind, Freudenberg asserted a number of claims. First, she explored a number of reasons why people did not intervene, including uncertainty in interpreting whether a person is actually in need, fear of embarrassment, fear of being harmed, diffusing responsibility to others in the crowd, the high cost of intervention, lack of feeling competent in a potential intervention, and social control from the crowd itself (Darley & Latane 1968; Chekroun & Bauer 2002). In particular, she problematized group or crowd dynamics, which she referred to as “The Popular Mind” and herd mentality, where “individuals become dominated by the collective mindset of the crowd” and where those in the minority “...fall silent while those perceived to be in the majority thrive” (HarassMap Training Notes, 2014). Indeed, early research produced primarily by Latane and Darley demonstrated that individuals on their own were more likely to intervene than those in a group setting. Research on group dynamics shows that individuals become more passive based on their interpretation of group reactions, and that they look for cues among the crowd to provide an indication of how they should react and respond (Darley et al. 1973). In Freudenberg’s estimation, the way to combat this was to provide

bystanders with more information about a victim, not personal information but general facts that humanized these victims, and to somehow establish a connection between bystanders and victims, such that bystanders would have a vested interest in intervening and would be able to overcome the effects of the crowd.

This assertion emerged from Freudenberg's reading, and coverage, of theory that noted bystanding would be more pronounced in high ambiguity situations. People were more likely to intervene if a situation was well understood (low ambiguity), if they had an interest in the outcome of the situation, and if they perceived minimal consequences for intervening. Concomitantly, Freudenberg noted that the more connected (or homogenous) the group, and the less anonymity that existed between community members, the more likely it was that a victim would receive support from within their community. Likewise, research shows that bystanders may actually speak up and intervene when witnessing the breaking of a norm if they feel personally vested in the norm (Chekroun and Bauer 2002). Sexual violence research in the United States highlights how community norms are shaped by bystander interventions and, therefore, educating the populace through prevention programs is vital (Banyard et al. 2004). Research on the relationship between the political context, the populace and the activists in the middle also shows that bystander responses to political events don't just effect the community but influence the way activists view the same event (Braun & Koopmans 2012). Accordingly, the reactions of observant and watchful bystanders may direct social interventions. Important here is the concept of "bystander public," or what Freudenberg called "Early Adopters." These are non-adherents to a movement or observers to an event/issue, i.e. "distal spectators"

that may bear witness and respond to political or social movement issues, and may later become movement adherents (McCarthy & Zald 1977; Snow et al. 1981).

Bystander publics are those segments of the public that social movements, like HarassMap, seek to mobilize to their cause, depending on how movement leaders decide resources are best allocated (McCarthy & Zald 1977). These are individuals with some level of social and political consciousness, and though they are generally non-engaged they may emerge as observers and commentators to the breakdown – and restoration - of public order. Their reactions can quickly politicize an issue/event, or even influence the behavior of law enforcement entities (Snow et al. 1981). Bystander publics are necessary in refashioning dominant social norms. Freudenberg drew on theory around Early Adopters, to note how it took only a few individuals “quick on the uptake” to change the dynamic of a crowd and build support within a group. For new norms to take hold a critical mass of support would be required and once a tipping point of bystander publics is reached, larger social change ensues and institutionalization through legal codification becomes possible (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998; Marwell & Oliver 1993).

Critical mass is defined as “a loose metaphorical way to refer to the idea that some threshold of participants or actions has to be crossed before a social movement ‘explodes’ into being” and tipping point, according to Freudenberg, was that moment when a group radically changed to adopt a “previously rare practice” (Oliver & Marwell 1985: 523). Theorizing on critical mass and tipping point often do not examine the grassroots origins of new norms, nor do they make clear what constitutes a critical mass and where tipping points may lie, though some mathematical formulations have been postulated for how a critical mass may be calculated (Marwell & Oliver 1993). While a

fundamental part of social movement theory, problems identified with critical mass include the need to motivate and incentivize people to action, as well as the challenge of “free riders,” who are individuals that do not support a movement but somehow benefit from movement achievements. Regardless, bystander publics serve as meaningful elements in the facilitation of new sociopolitical or cultural norms, as well as integral features of a potentially ensuing critical mass of support. Bystander reactions are dialectically shaped by and shape social activism and politico-legal practices.

It is important to note while HarassMap operates within this framework to mobilize bystanders to speak up against sexual harassment, they do not maintain any clear notions of what constitute a critical mass. In her workshop session, Freudenberg discussed the theoretical underpinnings of what proportion of individuals needed to adopt a new norm before others in society would do so. Yet, the session did not end with recommendations of specific programmatic approaches to achieving a critical mass. In this vein, there are no established targets with respect to the numbers required to facilitate societal-wide change, and this part of their philosophical platform has been left deliberately vague. Here, tipping point is a mythical point that is reached when recognized, i.e. they would know it when they see it. However, elements presented in this workshop have since been incorporated into newer versions of community trainings, including HMA and Safe Schools and Universities, where captains and volunteers are given information to understand why people may choose not to intervene. Freudenberg optimistically ended the workshop session by noting that social change was only a person away. Drawing on the theory of six degrees of separation, she stated that everyone was ultimately connected to each other and that it would be possible to get people to shift

their thinking in a cascade-like effect. The end goal would be the admittedly grand notion of “ending the social acceptability” of sexual harassment

### **Mobilizing for Social Change: HarassMap and Community Activism**

Even without clear, theoretically informed strategies for generating socially conscious bystander publics, HarassMap actively seeks to engage as many bystanders in the street as possible. Their community-based activism located in the streets and on school campuses directly targets members of the public/bystanders, rather than state institutional structures and politico-legal frameworks. Their approach to ending the bystander effect encompasses both changing perceptions and changing behaviors one person (or one entity) at a time in the hopes that doing so will facilitate wider changes at the base of society. As discussed in Chapter 4, a number of initiatives worked in tandem to frame new norms around sexual harassment and gender-based violence in Egypt. Through the production of new norms, anti-sexual harassment activists seek to re-order public beliefs and values that sexual harassment is an unproblematic form of flirtation and that it is, instead, an unwanted violation of women’s bodies and a criminal act that people must speak up about and not accept. In the following section, how these new discourses are deployed and circulated through society will be explored. The spread of these new ideas (across class and age groups) and promoting new values underpins the mobilization of bystanders to intervene and reject the reality of sexual harassment in Egypt. In order to get people to speak up, HarassMap directly confronts the entrenched historic norms that prevent them from doing so. HarassMap employs three critical methods to mobilize bystanders, including street campaigns, creating safe areas, and



technological deployments. Each are discussed below, along with the inherent challenges they pose to HarassMap efforts.

### *Street Campaigns: Mobilizing Communities to Action*

In fall 2013, following the conclusion of the HarassMap Academy (HMA), the HarassMap Community Outreach team began a series of mobile training academies, one of the first of which took place in the agricultural oasis town of Fayoum City in the Fayoum governorate an hour south of Cairo. The mobile training academy consisted of two segments: the first was a lengthy 2-3 hour workshop that, in brief, replicated some of the information that was provided to captains at the HMA; the second was a practice street outreach event, in which HarassMap staff followed, listened and offered guidance to new volunteers about speaking to bystanders in the street. Roughly, ten new volunteers showed up to the workshop, of whom two were young women and the rest were young men. The Community Outreach Director began the session by asking the volunteers how many of them had experienced sexual harassment, which, in a room primarily full of young men, generated initial surprise and a few uncomfortable moments of silence. Only one young man spoke up to say that as a child of 12 living in Saudi Arabia, he was sexually harassed, but provided no details of the situation. Here, the Director, while sympathetic, used this as a springboard to move into a discussion of who HarassMap was and the goal of their work, noting that child molestation, unfortunately, was not within the scope of their mission, but that children themselves learned to become sexual harassers from those around them, including those within their own families, that accepted it as a normal practice. He stated that HarassMap's work was focused on ending

this social acceptability of sexual harassment and that, in order to do so, they targeted bystanders, encouraging them to reject sexual harassment and to build slow change around having people not tolerate it as an unproblematic practice. In part, he noted that the goal was to also create safety in the street and to get people to speak out against sexual harassment the way they did to theft.

A small rift was visible in the contentious dialogue that arose between the volunteers and the Director over HarassMap's bystander approach to ending sexual harassment. One of the volunteers pointedly asked why HarassMap did not take the stories they received from their map and work with the police to find a solution to the problem. Another volunteer asked why the Ministry of Interior, the state entity in charge of the police forces, did not also address the problem at the national level. The Community Outreach Director argued that the police were not a solution, that they were often harassers themselves or they dismissed sexual harassment as a problem. He further maintained that the instability of the last several years of revolution also made it difficult to work on this problem side-by-side with the state. Aspects of this conversation circled around how criminality had changed in Egypt post-Revolution, where volunteers insisted that people increasingly refused to speak up against thieves, indicating that failures to speak up against sexual harassment, perhaps, were not centered on people's perceptions that it was acceptable, but on larger fears of engaging with unknown elements in the streets. Yet, at the same time, volunteers claimed that Fayoum, as a small and closed community, was not like Cairo in that sexual harassment was not as perceptible a problem. They made the point that, like in many small towns, everyone in Fayoum knew each other, sexual harassment did not really happen, and that if a case of sexual

harassment somehow occurred the harasser would be shunned. This then lead to the question of why HarassMap did not directly go after harassers themselves, instead of bystanders. Concerns were raised that it would be all too easy for bystanders to say “*wana mālly?*,” or “what business is it of mine?”.

Following the completion of the workshop, where HarassMap also discussed what volunteers could expect to hear from bystanders in the street, a practice outreach was conducted along one of the busiest streets in the center of Fayoum City. The volunteers, who by this time were an all male-group as the female volunteers from the workshop disappeared, broke into two smaller groups. One of these teams began by visiting a clothing store and a pharmacy that sat along a canal snaking through downtown before they approached a small group of young men sitting together on the canal wall. In the businesses, the team spoke with two young women that, like the volunteers in the workshop, argued that sexual harassment was a huge problem, but that Fayoum was not like Cairo. The young woman managing the clothing store stated that there was more safety in the streets and that this problem did not exist in Fayoum in the same way it did in Cairo. In the pharmacy, however, the young woman argued that theft and sexual harassment could not be compared, but they were both wrong and that people tended to ignore sexual harassment. Both young women agreed when asked by the volunteers if they would say something if they saw sexual harassment happen, yet they were never asked what behaviors constituted sexual harassment. The exchange with the young men, however, was of a completely different nature.

Unlike the young women in the stores, the young men, who looked to be in their late teens, were less serious and spoke joking and laughingly about sexual harassment. In

this conversation, those behaviors that could be classified as harassing came into dispute. The idea that simple comments and, more particularly, stares could constitute sexual harassment appeared most problematic for these boys, one of whom stated that he looked at all people all the time and what was he supposed to do. Moreover, the boys noted that girls dressed in particular ways to be stared at and that not all young women were respectable. The contested nature of sexual harassment was also visible when the boys were asked what they thought sexual harassment was, to which they replied that it was the type of mob harassment and assault that occurred during the Eid holidays. When asked about speaking up against sexual harassment, the boys then noted that quite often women and their “harassers” knew each other, which appeared to indicate that these boys saw gendered street interactions as a form of flirtation. They worried that it was not their business to intervene and that it could potentially anger either the woman or the harasser with whom the woman was engaged in some type of courtship behavior. When one of the volunteers countered this by arguing harassers were like thieves, one of the boys reiterated what the volunteers stated in training, that while both were wrong people were not as active in standing up to theft anymore. The conversation continued on for more than half an hour without the same type of resolution that occurred in the two businesses.

This example of HarassMap’s mobile training academy provides insight into how HarassMap seeks to foment social change by working directly inside of communities and asking people to see problems and then work to change them in particular ways. It also highlights the challenges HarassMap, and other similar initiatives, face when working to combat deeply entrenched norms and values that the public does not already view as problematic and inequitable. Evident in the example, HarassMap’s work in the streets to

change social perceptions and behaviors rests on a dual-layered decentralized approach that involves 1) building a corps of community leaders, or captains as HarassMap refers to them, and then 2) having those captains build their own community teams that independently conduct outreach under the auspices of HarassMap's name and oversight.

The selection and trainings of community captains is more rigorous than that of the captain's team members. Community captains serve as representatives and liaisons into the communities for HarassMap and they report directly to the Community Outreach Director, though there is an intermediary individual, the Community Mobilization Coordinator, who assists in managing, communicating with and organizing teams across Egypt. Twice a year, HarassMap receives a few hundred applications from interested individuals from various backgrounds and age groups for, roughly, 20 spots at each HarassMap Academy (HMA). Selection criteria for these captains involve several factors, such as the volunteer's professional or volunteer experiences, their goals in working with HarassMap, and their governorate of origin. Additionally, as developed over the course of this research, there was a drive within Community Outreach to be more selective in their choice of captains, to ensure that those who took on leadership roles not only wanted to combat sexual harassment but also maintained some sense of the gender inequality underpinning the problem. The unit Director noted at one point that while many of the volunteers might not like sexual harassment not all of them believed in gender equality, which he found problematic.

Community captains, in turn, recruited team members largely through Facebook in order to broaden their community reach, but also did so through their own personal networks. In general, anyone with interest and commitment were free to join a

community team. HarassMap's requirement for captains was that they organize a minimum of 1-2 street outreach days a month and that following the outreach they submit a report of what unfolded with bystanders in the streets, so that HarassMap could monitor public sentiments and what their teams were dealing with. Captains maintained responsibility for organizing these outreach days, though HarassMap was critical in supplying resources to teams, including handouts, posters, flyers, and stickers that teams would pass out or plaster in public places. Twice a year, HarassMap would also organize their mobile academies, which required weeks of travel to outside governorates for team members. Part of HarassMap's training to captains included that they should download and print relevant reports from HarassMap's Ushahidi map to take with them on campaigns to show bystanders proof of the problem of sexual harassment in the area. Each team maintained its own unique HarassMap community Facebook page, and what became a common and popular practice was uploading photos from outreach events as they were unfolding. The founder of Ded el-Taharrush, Ayman Nagy, noted that they also engaged in the same for their outreach events and that providing the public with real-time information was important to show people how active the initiative was in combatting sexual harassment and generating continued interest for future recruitment.

Both captains and their team members work on volunteer bases and HarassMap provides no financial compensation or remuneration to volunteers for their outreach work. The spirit of volunteerism was identified by HarassMap staff to be a critical facet of community work, which was similarly noted by members of other initiatives, such as Harakat Bassma and Ded el-Taharrush. Such volunteerism was viewed as more authentic and was thought to ensure that those engaging in community activism had a true passion

for working toward social change. Compensation and salaries were conversely viewed as a potential source of conflict, where salaries could either lead to people feeling their volunteerism was more of a job and, therefore, an obligation that they could not easily get out of if they so chose. There was also concern that this, in addition to increasingly bureaucratic structures required to manage financial flows, would then lead to decreasing passion for and effectiveness in the work. Moreover, differing levels of compensation for volunteers/staff was noted as a possible cause for enmity, which would be detrimental to the longevity of the initiative (Saad Zaghloul Interview, February 2014). However, according to HarassMap's Executive Director, Rebecca Chiao, some compensation and financial structure for running events was crucial. She noted that while the spirit of volunteerism was important, also ensuring that goals could be met was even more so and that there was nothing more demoralizing than to work hard and strive for something and not be able to achieve it because of a lack of resources. Such sentiments were debated among many of the members of HarassMap, Ded el-Taharrush and Harakat Bassma as they grappled with efforts to reach as many people as possible in their outreach, while still seeking to retain their connection to their grassroots base as they all contemplated the need for formal registration, institutionalization, and accepting foreign funding.

Street campaigns and grassroots outreach were often stressful and fractious, signaling that the street itself is a highly contested field of meaning, or a contact zone. The opening example demonstrated how changing people's perceptions is fraught with tension over that which constitutes sexual harassment and what the best course of action is to end this problem. Part of HarassMap's training indicated the need for volunteers to disengage from arguments and to politely keep conversations focused and on track, using

statistics and testimonies to demonstrate the reality of sexual harassment as a problem. Yet, as in the Fayoum outreach, heated debates between HarassMap volunteers and bystanders were not uncommon. Public responses to HarassMap arguments frequently included victim-blaming sentiments and the defense of male behavior by justifying, minimizing, and excusing sexually harassing actions. Moreover, there was often outright disagreement that certain actions were, in fact, real problems, such as staring at women, as described above. Outreach reports submitted to HarassMap from various teams across Egypt further demonstrate that many bystanders insist that dress stimulates sexual harassment, that girls usually do not get harassed in their home neighborhoods, that sexual harassment is the fault of both the woman and the man, among other things. Combatting such sentiments is a challenge, and not always successful. Yet, minimally, the goal has been to secure an agreement from bystanders that they would say something to stop sexual harassment if they saw it.

Additionally, volunteer teams are differentially active, with some teams running more frequent and regular outreach events than others. Teams in Cairo and the Delta region, such as Alexandria, Port Said and Manshiyet Nasr, are generally considered more independent, and even more effective. A goal of HarassMap's Community Outreach unit is for teams to become almost franchised, operating on their own to employ HarassMap's model but not heavily depend on HarassMap's Cairo-based staff to take the reigns in organizing and running street campaigns. The inactivity of many of the teams is linked to a number of potential factors. In part, maintaining volunteer commitment is an incredible task for HarassMap, made all the more challenging by difficulties in keeping up constant communication with teams. With more than 1400 volunteers in 23 governorates, and a



Community Outreach staff of two (until recently) to manage all volunteers, the task is daunting if not seemingly impossible. Moreover, as demonstrated above, not all individuals agree with bystander approaches to ending sexual harassment. This is particularly the case in areas where, according to the Community Outreach director, people are more “interventionist” in orientation, seeking to target harassers directly. In the case of Ded el-Taharrush, targeting harassers involves shaming them into better behavior, and numerous entities, including the online movement Efdah Mutaharrish (Shame the Harasser), took the approach of posting pictures of harassers on Facebook and embarrassing them for their misbehavior. Additionally, not all volunteers believe in disrupting gender binaries and stereotypes, which require a complete re-ordering of the entire system of gender in Egypt.

The process of volunteering for HarassMap, as it is developing, requires volunteers to confront their own assumptions around gender and the naturalization of certain roles for women and men in society. HarassMap training workshops, such as the Gender Box, were designed around the purpose of getting community leaders to see gendered binaries as a social construct and not as natural categories. Yet, for many, such discussions are confusing and new. While captains are often able to contribute to discussions focused on gendered discrimination, and while they also see connections between gender discrimination and deeply held patriarchal (*dhakariyya* or *abawiyya*) norms that underpin sexual harassment, their ability (and desire) to wield these notions into coherent and believable arguments against sexual harassment and gender violence, in general, is unclear. A salient example of this from the spring 2014 HMA was the general confusion around notions of gendered power, gender binaries, and heteronormativity,

where future captains noted that women were objectified and men would argue that they weren't able to control themselves. Yet, there did not appear to be any notion that in order to end sexual harassment the system of gender as whole needed to be upended. Whether captains are able and want to convey these sentiments in a down-the-line fashion to their own volunteer teams, who do not receive the full HarassMap training unless they seek to become captains, is additionally unclear.

### *Creating Safe Areas in Communities and Schools*

“The mission is to, as the first step, make businesses safe because we think that through this method we can influence street culture, the culture of sexual harassment, because we're establishing safe zones and these safe zones will help us to influence, let's say, the atmosphere in a given area. And so far, judging by some examples, we have reason to believe that it will work. It's also based on some theories, like the tipping point effect...we are not targeting the harasser and we are not supporting the victim, this will both be a side effect of actually changing the street culture, which is changing the attitude of the people who are living, passing by, who are existing in a certain area, either as a business owner or supplier or just like passing through...we think we can reach a critical mass where the atmosphere is changing radically...that harassers will get the signal that harassment is not accepted anymore in that area. We don't need to convince everyone, we need to convince the people who have the most influence on a certain area...” (HarassMap Safe Areas Operations Manager, Interview March 2014).

As an initial sub-unit of Community Outreach, and then a unit in its own right, Safe Areas (SA) and Safe Schools and Universities (SSU – combined SA/SSU), is one of HarassMap's fastest growing programs. However, working inside of schools is not a new idea to anti-sexual harassment activists. From the early years of the ECWR Safe Streets campaign, the idea existed that working in schools and socializing children to see sexual harassment as a violation of bodily integrity was an important mode by which to change the culture from the ground up. Toward that end, ECWR established a formal project, as part of its Safe Streets efforts, to work with teachers and school administrators to raise awareness among students and parents. This project was in effect until 2013, though the

degree to which they were active is unknown. In part, working inside of schools, particularly secondary schools, is challenging for activists, both because it usually requires high-level approvals that are not easy to obtain and that there is denial and push back from families who do not agree with or want their children exposed to the topic.

For that reason, in 2013, when HarassMap was making its own plans for entry into schools, they began collaborative talks with a new, up-and-coming Egyptian NGO that was a partner in UN Women's Safe Cities initiative. Safe Kids was formed a year before to combat the problem of child sexual abuse and assault. More importantly, they received approval from the city mayor of Heliopolis, an upscale Cairene neighborhood, to provide trainings to teachers and administrators in almost 60 schools on how to recognize the signs of sexual abuse. In addition, they offered psychological services to children and families, though they had little ability to substantially assist abused children by removing them from unsafe homes, especially given the lack of state infrastructure to support families in crisis. HarassMap sought to team up with Safe Kids to begin building the equivalent of community captains from among the staff inside of schools that would build their own internal teams to work with students and families about sexual harassment. For primary and secondary schools, this work required developing curricula around bodily integrity designed for students at varying age levels that went beyond HarassMap's expertise. The partnership with Safe Kids, in this respect, was critical because they already utilized age appropriate materials that could be enhanced with additional information. Funded by UN Habitat, HarassMap ran a pilot study focused on 5 schools, from the secondary to university level, to build and test the design of their program. However, as it unfolded, work in the primary and secondary schools was

erratic, whereas at the university level, students and administrators were far more ready to take on the problem of sexual harassment.

As discussed in Chapter 4, SA began in parallel with SSU and centered instead on public entities, mostly including small and large businesses. In its planning stages, HarassMap wanted to build role models that would encourage other businesses and public organizations to follow their lead. Toward this end, there were two trains of thought on how to accomplish this: by recruiting large corporate entities, such as Vodafone, or to focus on smaller community level businesses, like sidewalk kiosks, taxis, and privately owned family businesses. With the first, corporate enterprises with branch stores were thought to offer faster and more expansive entry into multiple neighborhoods at once. However, some internal discomfort with this, along with the eventual realization that large companies were not jumping on board with becoming safe areas, turned HarassMap's attentions toward community-level businesses. Moreover, Community Outreach staff had already begun to recruit small businesses to become safe areas. The first of these was a Zamalek kiosk located near a popular Hardees fast food restaurant, in which the proprietor installed a camera and began catching and chastising men for harassing women in the area. The kiosk owner argued that sexual harassment was keeping people away from patronizing his kiosk, and he feared the rampant sexual harassment in Zamalek itself would keep people from the area, in general.

The kiosk owner's sentiments reflected one of HarassMap's goals with SA – for businesses to see the potentially positive effects of standing up to sexual harassment by becoming a safe place for clients to patronize. In theory, in neighborhoods rife with sexual harassment, such safe areas would be havens for individuals to remain in public

but be free from unwanted interactions, thus making them more attractive than other businesses. Businesses that did not become safe areas would then suffer the financial ramifications of allowing sexual harassment to continue, either inside or in the streets around their premises. From the beginning, both SSU and SA were predicated on similar foundations. For SA, the mission is recruiting businesses and other public entities to become role models to encourage other businesses to follow suit. This is undertaken on a street-by-street basis, recruiting one business at a time on a single street until the whole street itself is a safe area. For SSU it is building school teams that offer campus outreach and trainings. Both seek to build slow rejection for sexual harassment in their respective community locations. More importantly, both SA/SSU also promote the need to develop tangible escalation policies for dealing with incidences of sexual harassment. For that purpose, HarassMap built multiple policy templates for different types of public and private entities. One such template was sent to the Cairo University faculty committee that worked to establish a campus policy following the high profile sexual harassment incident at the Faculty of Law.

Of the two programs, SSU has grown significantly, with their primary presence located on university campuses, with currently more than 380 student volunteers in 7 universities throughout Egypt. Like Community Outreach, SSU trains university captains using Community Outreach workshop materials and even organizing weeklong training academies mirroring HMA. An early SSU training workshop held at HarassMap's offices in Maadi in April 2014 for students at Cairo University, Ain Shams University and the American University in Cairo, underscored what HarassMap sees as the critical need for gender-based approaches inside of universities. The first two hours of the session focused

extensively on the excuses people gave for sexual harassment, with students offering numerous stories about interactions with professors and other students. The SA/SSU Director, who was then the Field Operations Manager, noted that excuses offered among university populations were more advanced than what you might hear in the street, that students and professionals were cleverer in their argumentation skills and decided in their opinions. For instance, he stated that on campus there is no way to claim that an unveiled woman who is sexually harassed might be Christian. The implication is that people's sentiments around victim blaming cannot be countered based on their lack of knowledge of a person's religion. On campus people would somehow be able to tell which individuals were and were not Muslims and unveiled Muslim girls would always be in the wrong if they failed to cover. Gender issues, he noted, were more stark on campus and moving forward trainings needed to have an underlying theory of gender in order to better combat the patriarchal bias underpinning sexual harassment. Trainings since have employed the Gender Box workshop and also explicitly promote building a critical mass, drawing on materials from the internal HarassMap professional development session on the bystander effect offered only weeks before.

As with Community Outreach, confronting bystander biases is a contentious process in the SA/SSU program. In the SA program, the connection between corporate practices and cultural norms is an important question. To what extent does the development of internal policies and due process within businesses pervade wider social perceptions, such that the culture around sexual harassment shifts? Is there a link between neoliberal market forces within which businesses are embedded and societal practices? This question was particularly salient when HarassMap was in conversations with multi-

national entities, such as Vodafone, but is no less so with their work around small businesses. Moreover, does the policy approach with businesses and universities differ from NGO political and legal advocacy that similarly seeks codified definitions and enforced punishments for sexual harassment? In part, the approach of SA does not simply view business owners and employees in their capacity as capitalist entrepreneurs. Instead, it sees them as individual members of their communities with a stake in the safety of their neighbors, and potential client base. Enterprise, therefore, serves as a springboard for advancing claims around individual social responsibility, but it is not the enterprise itself that is seen as a force for change. This approach grounds corporate and business owners and employees more firmly into communities and does not absolve them of the responsibility of ensuring the safety and integrity of the communities they are a part of and serve. At the same time, policy approaches are geared toward similar outcomes as legal advocacy, i.e. the creation of institutionalized frameworks that criminalize and penalize certain behaviors. Policy approaches, however, are not singularly restricted to the level of state practice and encompass a broad range of both public and private entities, whether large or small. In their work with small businesses and schools, such an approach by anti-sexual harassment initiatives only confirms how cultural negotiations are themselves political acts that have material political effects.

### *Technology for Social Change: Online Spaces and Tools to Mobilize Dissent*

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) play an important role, alongside on-the-ground efforts inside of communities, in the work of shifting perceptions and mobilizing the public to action. The use of ICTs in anti-sexual

harassment work evolved alongside its use within other entities in Egypt seeking to combat political corruption, which numerous scholars emphasize played a significant, if not generative, role in the Revolutions that swept across the region in 2011 (El Tantawy & Weist 2011; Khamis and Vaughn 2013; Lim 2012; Shahin 2012). Activists and scholars alike view technology as both a tool and a space that allows for the negotiation of new subjectivities and where inequality and violence can be challenged in pursuit of free and democratic futures (Aouragh & Alexander 2011; Rifaat 2008). New forms of activism in Egypt employing ICTs are made possible with the increasing growth and ease in the availability of varying technologies, primarily Internet and mobile phone access. As of December 2013, the rate of Internet penetration reached almost half the country at 45%, and mobile phone penetration rates were as high as 118%, indicating that while almost half of Egyptians had access to the Internet, almost all Egyptians owned at least one if not two mobile phone (MCIT 2014). Social media outpaces other available online sites and platforms, with Facebook surpassing Google as the most visited Internet site in Egypt by mid-2013 (Ahram 2014; Digibuzz 2013). The potential of social media was summed up by HarassMap's (former) Director of Marketing and Communications who stated, "I was shocked when I realized that people can access social media but may never have an email address...I realized when someone would send us a message and they wanted to get in touch with us somehow, people would be like 'how do I do that?' because they don't actually have email. They have Facebook but they don't have email, which is crazy for us because we all had email first and then social media came about. Especially the younger generation, their first interaction was through social media..." (Interview, April 2014).



HarassMap stands out from other anti-sexual harassment initiatives in Egypt for its broader and more integrated use of varying technologies. They employ three specific technological platforms, including 1) an Internet-based GIS mapping system developed by Ushahidi that allows people to report and spatially plot the location of their sexual harassment incidences on a map, otherwise known as crowd-mapping, 2) a mobile phone-based SMS system linked to their Ushahidi map, and 3) Internet-based social media sites, particularly Facebook, but also Twitter and, to a lesser extent, Tumblr. In particular, crowd-mapping is argued to be a unique, creative, and more importantly, democratic method for expanding the way information is generated, disseminated and utilized since it depends on reports from the public (Howe 2006; Lane 2010). Through crowd-mapping, HarassMap gave the public both a space and tool to speak up about sexual violence anonymously, something not guaranteed through other technological platforms. For HarassMap staff, this was vital given the historic silence and stigma surrounding sexual harassment. Moreover, the data it generates allows HarassMap teams to mobilize communities by demonstrating the reality and impact of the phenomenon on victims. As already discussed, stories from the map are printed out for each street outreach event in order to convince members of the public that sexual harassment is real.

Ushahidi works by bringing together a database linked to Google maps and telecom services. The database is housed on HarassMap's website and is interfaced through a web report form that acts as a type of online survey. Members of the public with Internet connectivity can access the form, fill out a number of questions, describe their experience of sexual harassment, and then turn to a map and click on the location where their experience took place. This information is sent to a dashboard where the

report can be reviewed and approved. Reports go through an internal verification process, and once approved they become visible on the public side of HarassMap's map for anyone visiting the site to see and serving as testimony to people's suffering. SMS technology allows individuals to send their story to the map via text message. A mobile phone short code was established to provide a more accessible tool for those without Internet access or who were less active on social media to report incidents of sexual harassment. Since 2010, SMS has played a fairly minor role in expanding the breadth of voices speaking up against sexual harassment. In the most recent statistic generated by HarassMap, SMS reports accounted for less than 10% of the more than 1200 reports received through the map to date. However, it is often of critical concern for staff members looking to improve reporting options, given the differences in penetration rates of mobile phone and Internet technologies.

Problematic with crowdsourcing as a new data collection method and for mobilizing the public sentiment against sexual harassment is the lack of knowledge on whose stories have come to shape understandings of the phenomenon in Egypt. Anonymity combined with biases in Internet access have made it difficult to know which segments of society are utilizing the map, how experiences and perceptions may differ among social classes and age groups, and why certain individuals choose to speak up when others may remain silent. Moreover, while HarassMap staff argue that it is often easy to tell which submitted stories are fake and which are real, this is a particular confound with the system, where anything that meets the basic criteria for reports may be approved. There are no additional modes by which to follow up with victims and verify the veracity of the stories. With respect to outreach, stories are easy to dismiss as not

genuine or made up, especially in situations where the public is not clear on how such data is generated and more tangible knowledge of victim identities. From a maintenance standpoint, HarassMap staff rely on IT professionals to update and fix Ushahidi when a problem occurs and, until recently, this was only possible with external help from international partners as Egypt had no Ushahidi experts. SMS floundered given the lack of specialized knowledge to deal with problems and how best to deploy the technology. At the end of 2013, the SMS system was down for several months, in which time text message reports were not received and some were thought to be lost overall.

For these reasons, social media is a very popular space and tool for activism and reporting, and a number of HarassMap staff members believe it to be more user-friendly and easier to manipulate than Ushahidi. Social media affords activists the ability to encourage reporting, deploy messaging campaigns with concomitant visual components, and to organize teams across the country. Reports submitted via social media that meet review criteria are manually uploaded to the Ushahidi map, though the contours of social media reports differ from that of reports received directly by the map and may include information tailored toward a particular online campaign. They are usually not anonymous and sometimes also include photos and information about the harasser in question. Because of a full lack of details, reporting through social media reduces HarassMap's ability to treat reports as a data set from which they are able to draw certain conclusions about the changing state of sexual harassment in Egypt. Reports cannot be downloaded, filtered or controlled as easily via social media as with crowdsourcing platforms and, therefore, hinder HarassMap's ability to more objectively track changes in social perceptions over time. Also, as with online platforms in general, social media

outlets are not widely accessible to all segments of the population, and have been noted by HarassMap's Marketing and Communications Director as a below the line media that, while full of potential, does not yet have the reach of mass media like tv.

Yet, each of HarassMap's major campaigns, such as *byitharrash lih?*, *şallahha fi dimāghak*, *mesh sākta*, and *'ayizīn siyāsa guwa el-gām 'a*, were deployed and their broad reach monitored via Facebook and Twitter. For the *mesh sākta* campaign, there were multiple phases that asked people to upload photos and videos of themselves providing tips to standing up to sexual harassment. Also, all of HarassMap's community outreach and SSU teams maintain their own individual group page through which they send out HMA applications, report activities (and upload photos from outreach events) in real time to recruit new members, keep each other updated on news stories of sexual harassment and gender violence in the country, and generally maintain a sense of community with each other as a team. As such, it is an invaluable tool in helping to disseminate information and generate new members. HMA is primarily advertised through Facebook and, while college-aged students represent the vast number of active volunteers, they are not the only ones. HMA's also include professionals working in other community-based organizations, and even a stay-at-home mom that came with her infant in fall 2013.

While technology represents a vital component with respect to mobilization, by itself there is question as to whether it can change societal perceptions and behaviors. As noted for the Revolution, technologies to foment dissent were not viewed as generating the discontent that made the Revolution possible. Technology, especially online technologies, such as Facebook and YouTube, provided opposition movements the ability to incite an already dissatisfied populace into action, allowing opposition leaders to send

out calls for action and to organize on the ground protest (Khoury 2014). Also noted by HarassMap's Executive Director, Rebecca Chiao, online activism is more of a bonus to the offline work of mobilizing communities. Despite the excitement and the potential around employing Ushahidi, which was a new technology when HarassMap formed, the co-founders always saw it as guiding but not supplanting grassroots activism. In this way, ICTs play a more supportive, yet no less critical, role in mobilizing the public.

### **Bystander Publics: Changing The Nature of Social Responsibility**

There are a number of criticisms around the notion that a corps of bystander publics will intervene against sexual harassment when they witness it. In part, bystanders are not an undifferentiated mass of potentially interested individuals that will speak up when necessary. Movements are comprised of 1) adherents, or those that become active in a cause, 2) bystander publics, or those on the sidelines that may become movement adherents but are at present uncommitted, 3) another category of public referred to as weak supporters, or those individuals that may share in a movement's values and who actually provide some level of support but do not commit resources, in terms of time and funds, to assist the movement (this category also includes free loaders, or those who do not provide assistance but benefit from a movement's achievements) and 4) opposition, those that do not support movement goals (Ennis & Schreuer 1987; McCarthy & Zald 1987). It is not clear what the relationship is between these categories of the public, nor is it understood what stimulates bystanders to either become weak supporters or adherents. Additionally, that which constitutes a bystander is shifting, particularly in the age of above and below the line media forms, where technology is increasingly mediating how

people perceive the world (Koopmans 2004). What it means to understand an issue, to recognize a problem, and actually be a witness to that problem in person are all under contestation. Here, witnessing itself may no longer singularly occur in the street, as people are ever increasingly watching events from behind their televisions and computers and lending their voices, if not other resources, to an issue (Ahmad 2013). An example of this is the sexual harassment incident of the female student at the College of Law at Cairo University, in which Cairo University's President blamed the women for being sexually harassed because she removed her black, outer robes, but not her actual clothing or her *hijab*, head scarf. The incident aired across Egypt's major broadcast and print news outlets, which stimulated surprisingly stringent public responses that necessitated the university President to retract his statement about the victim, prompted a corps of faculty to form a committee to create a new sexual harassment policy at the university, and was also the final push for the government to create the new amendment to Article 306 of the penal code. Though, admittedly, this incident built on years of publicized sexual harassment cases, particularly from Tahrir, which generated new public awareness.

Additionally, recent criticisms surrounding bystander intervention from those looking at how to end rape culture in the United States note that such approaches do not solve the underlying problem of sexual violence. In their New Inquiry article, Elk and Devereaux (2014) argued that there is inherent danger to the bystander in asking them to intervene in cases of sexual violence, like rape, and that bystanders, like victims, do not receive adequate support. They state that this does not eliminate victim-blaming rhetoric and only shifts where that rhetoric is directed, i.e. at bystanders that fail to provide assistance when needed. Moreover, in their estimation, bystander interventions appear to

be nothing more than another seeming form of vigilantism, which they note is an artifact of the violence that exists in state legal structures singularly designed to punish, rather than rehabilitate, offenders. “Even where bystander intervention is successful, disrupting one assault is not the same as ending violence. It’s not even violence prevention” (Elk & Devereux 2014). Ultimately, they believe that bystander intervention does not solve the problem of rape culture because it does not force people to look at themselves and address the violence they are capable of committing.

However, such arguments elide some of the complexities around both bystander behavior and social movement messaging. In part, this argument does not explore the nature of bystander interventions and does not define what constitutes intervention. There is a sense here that a physical intervention is required, yet other forms of intervention that are equally as helpful or lifesaving, yet do not require bystanders to put their bodies in harms way, are not discussed. In the case of Kitty Genovese, the New York woman that was brutally raped and murdered in an alley where 38 witnesses supposedly did nothing, a phone call to the police, everyone turning on their apartment lights and/or collectively yelling from their windows might have minimally scared Genovese’s murderer off before he murdered her, even if it did not stop the rape. This is purely speculative and it can’t be known for sure what the possibilities in the Genovese case would have been with bystander help. However, in Egypt, what is also evident is that bystanders are not averse to physically intervening and putting themselves in danger if they feel it is warranted by the situation. In the case of theft, where it is popularly known, and also regularly witnessed by many, whole neighborhoods will rally to catch and beat a harasser, with young men often forming small ad hoc posses and wielding sticks, iron bars, and chains,

to do so. In one well-reported case, villagers in a Delta town lynched a man for stealing a car, though this was linked to the devolving security situation in the post-Revolutionary context and is rather extreme for interventions in most theft cases (Michael 2013).

HarassMap's rhetoric of bystander intervention implicitly accepts that within a group of bystanders there will likely be many harassers. In attempting to avoid accusatory rhetoric that blames particular groups of people for sexual harassment, and to also avoid engaging in what scholars criticize as the neocolonial- inspired practice of misrepresenting Arab men, their discourse instead centers on the need to recognize that each individual has a responsibility to all other members in their community. Rather than shifting blame, this message is subtly refashioning the nature of social responsibility by asking people to reconsider their own inherent biases - biases that keep people silent or that prevent them from seeing the basic humanity of the victims of sexual violence. For this reason, bystander approaches are expanded beyond harassers – or victims – to the broad swath of the population, making all people equally accountable in building a better and more equitable society. The problem of viewing bystander approaches as a practice that shifts victim blaming and that does not address an individual's inner potential for violence, is that it draws on a particularly Western-inspired binary of the individual versus the community. Notions of individual responsibility only promote the need for people to control themselves and divorces them from any responsibility to the community in which they belong. For this reason, promoting community responsibility is instead viewed as ineffective and as another form of hegemony.

For social movements, bystanders are a critical component of the work they conduct, as they seek to ever expand their reach. In many ways, building bystander



publics is geared toward creating new forms of non-violent social pressure, where people feel compelled to conform to new norms that respect an individual's human rights. Notwithstanding the problematic vigilante violence in the Egyptian case mentioned above, entities like HarassMap seek, instead, non-violent methods in which people are not putting themselves in danger. Interventions and speaking up take many forms, from creating a dialogue within families and neighbors, to offering testimony of the sexual harassment they have witnessed, to being the first voice that says stop when a sexual harassment incident is occurring. The hope is that one voice becomes multiple voices and that group solidarity will prevent situations from devolving in to further violence.

What is it, then, that stimulates people to move from bystanders into either weak supporters or movement adherents? Empathy as a suggested motivation for interventions is a possibility, with Batson et al. (1981) establishing that empathy may have either egoistic or altruistic underlying bases. In either situation, it is the outcome of the intervention that determines its nature, meaning that people either see an end-stage benefit to themselves (egoistic) or to others (altruistic) for the intervention. Other studies examine multiple motivations, based on a range of emotions that bystanders experience when deciding to intervene in a situation, particularly in medical emergencies (Skora & Riegel 2001). Such motivations include empathy, feeling a sense of duty, guilt and social pressure. These types of motivations are visible in volunteer reasons for participating in anti-sexual harassment programs and activities. Volunteers from both HarassMap and Ded el-Taharrush were surveyed on a range of issues, including what precipitated their involvement in activism. The same survey was distributed to several hundred volunteers

across the two initiatives, of which an almost equal number of responses were received: a total of 22 surveys from Ded El-Taharrush and 19 surveys from HarassMap volunteers.

Demographically, differences were noticeable between the two sets of volunteers, with HarassMap respondents representing a slightly older population than Ded el-Taharrush. The median age of HarassMap members was 24 years and 20 years for Ded el-Taharrush, though at least three HarassMap respondents listed their age as 30+, and a number of others were 24 and above. Ded El-Taharrush respondents were primarily between the ages of 18-23 with two individuals that were 27 years old. There were equal numbers of male and female respondents for both initiatives, at 10 men and 9 women for HarassMap and 10 men, 11 women and 1 unspecified for Ded el-Taharrush. Generally speaking, there was a wide age distribution for men in HarassMap, with men represented at almost all ages between 21-30, but there appeared to be two primary age groups for women, from 18-20 and then 29-30+. That was not evident with Ded El-Taharrush members that were mostly under the age of 23. This possibly suggests that HarassMap work appeals to a broader range of individuals at differing life stages, whereas either the approach or the atmosphere within Ded el-Taharrush is attracting a younger set of volunteers. Moreover, the increasingly institutionalized nature of HarassMap's work also presents the possibility that they have a better ability to reach a broader swath of the population than Ded el-Taharrush, and are, therefore, able to recruit older volunteers.

Despite age variations in these organizations, responses demonstrate many similarities around the question of what made these individuals decide to volunteer for their respective initiatives. In particular, two themes are evident that confirm the motivations explored by Batson et al. (1981) and Skora & Reigel (2001). For the first

theme, reasons for joining were linked to having some personal experience with sexual harassment. Generally speaking, people wanted to offer assistance in order to mitigate the emotional and physical costs that sexual harassment caused to themselves and family members. Primarily visible among females, many of these respondents noted that they or other female family members and friends had been the victims of sexual harassment. Participation in anti-sexual harassment efforts, therefore, gave these women a chance to resist and reduce this phenomenon that caused them personal suffering. One respondent from Ded el-Taharrush noted that she volunteered (translated from Arabic), “Because I hate that I feel my body is violated all the time, and every time that I walk I hate my life more from the comments I hear and the attempts at physical harassment that happen. I hate being in a state of nervousness all the time and that I always keep a cutter in my hand, ready to repel an attack...” A HarassMap respondent also stated that, “...I personally want to know more about how to deal with situations like this in the street.” In part, self-preservation and finding proactive ways to deal with public sexual harassment was part of the underlying motivation for female volunteers in these initiatives.

In addition, another major theme in survey responses was volunteer desire to be involved as part of the solution to sexual harassment. This theme included two sub-components. Volunteers either noted that they wanted to promote greater respect for human and women’s rights or they indicated that they wanted to change social perceptions in order to improve the current sorry state and reputation of their society. These responses, derived from both men and women, highlight a mix of altruistic and egoistical motivations to volunteerism. Altruism in these responses is visible in abstract notions of creating a better society for all individuals, which, in the words of one Ded el-

Taharrush volunteer, “is the duty of all human beings.” Also mentioned by many volunteers were desires to help create safe spaces for women and girls, to see that women as a class were respected, and promoting women as human beings. Yet, what is also noticeable, particularly among Ded el-Taharrush volunteers, are egotistical motivations around the volunteers’ need to reaffirm their own principles and to be proud of their country by improving the state of social practice. One volunteer noted that, “My desire at attempting change will help me to hold on to my own humanity.”

These survey responses provide only a small glimpse into the myriad motivations that undoubtedly exist among the thousands that lend their time, energy, and even emotions, to combatting sexual harassment. They also hint at an interesting conundrum for anti-sexual harassment initiatives, in that it is clear that volunteer motivations are partially driven not only by concerns around protecting their own female family members, but women as a class. While this is seemingly unproblematic, it dovetails with concerns raised by activists that 1) it is not possible to advocate for change by appealing to people’s sense of responsibility toward their female family members, and 2) that there is a fine line that must be carefully watched between the “need to save women” and advocating for women to have the space and ability to fend for themselves. With the first, there is a push within the Community Outreach unit to avoid claims that individuals should consider all women to be like their sisters, mother’s, wives, or daughters, and therefore women should be protected from sexual harassment. The Community Outreach Director notes that such a claim only expands patriarchal control from a harasser’s immediate female kin to all of society’s women. Community Outreach, therefore, seeks to convey a sense of women’s overall right to access the public sphere regardless of

social location. With the second, the bystander approach itself is designed to target all members of society, both men and women, to create safety in the streets that prevents sexual harassment from occurring. In this way, women are also asked to speak up, and are actively encouraged to report their own stories and take back control of their bodies.

What these survey responses additionally demonstrate is the potential significance of creating a bystander public that seeks not only an end to the problem of sexual harassment but the creation of a more equitable society for all.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that anti-sexual harassment efforts to change social perceptions and behaviors is a cultural negotiation and, therefore, represents a political process. Criticism that such work is, in fact, depoliticizing is grounded in narrow assumptions about the nature of the political, where the political is synonymous with the political sphere. In such a view, cultural negotiations are viewed as separate and non-political in orientation. However, this chapter contends that the negotiation process is a political act and, as such, cultural negotiations are very much political. Seen this way, anti-sexual harassment efforts that are focused at the community and street levels, therefore, are not necessarily anxiety-worthy endeavors that reproduce the problem of sexual harassment. In fact, the opposite is the case, where initiatives seek to undercut patriarchal norms to redefine the way in which people view women's roles in public and their own responsibility vis-à-vis sexual violence that limits women's participation in public. Moreover, such avenues of change are, perhaps, far more profound than advocacy

for political and legal change because they seek to reconceptualize the fundamental bases of social belief.

Within this framework, the mobilizational strategies of entities like HarassMap, which is focused on the community or street, are geared toward two primary purposes: 1) challenging biased gendered norms that primarily disadvantage women, and 2) changing the nature of social responsibility by building a corps of bystanders publics that will speak up and intervene to end the social acceptability of sexual harassment. Toward this end, HarassMap's work at mobilizing bystanders occurs through street campaigns, creating safe areas, schools and universities, and through technological means to expand the reach of their social messaging. Work in the street directly engages with average individuals, school professionals and business owners and employees. Such work asks all, whether they agree with challenges to gendered norms or not, to minimally lend their voices of support to those being sexually harassed in public. Notwithstanding the challenges of such work, social movement scholars note that building popular support for movement values and goals is critical for movement success. Numerous motivations exist that propel people into supporting movement endeavors and potentially speaking up, motivations that are both altruistic and egoistical in orientation. Entities like HarassMap need to more adequately tap into such motivations to incite greater numbers toward their cause.

## CHAPTER 6: LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF *TAḤARRUSH GINSY*: INCOMPLETE FRAME ALIGNMENT IN THE RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In September 2013, members of the Egyptian anti-sexual harassment initiative, HarassMap, participated in the MasterPeace street festival in the upscale Cairene neighborhood of Dokki. MasterPeace is a global grassroots initiative aimed at mobilizing local communities to support peacebuilding through intercultural dialogue. HarassMap utilized this opportunity to continue to grow their public presence, to spread their message about ending the bystanding effect around sexual harassment, and to recruit new volunteers for community outreach teams. At one point, a heated exchange arose between an older man passing through the festival and HarassMap members on the existence of the phenomenon of *taḥarrush ginsy*, or sexual harassment, in Egypt. The crux of the man's argument was that *taḥarrush* was not a problem in Egypt. Instead, he noted that *mu'ākṣa*, or flirtation, was prevalent, though he qualified this by stating that *mu'ākṣa* also existed in other countries (even America) and was not unique to Egypt, but that *taḥarrush* was a "big word" that should not be used lightly. HarassMap members, for their part, approached the man's argument first by asking him if he had daughters and how he felt about the possibility of them being harassed in the street. Then, in more agitated fashion, female volunteers detailed what harassment was really like for them and other women in the streets. Underpinning HarassMap's counter-arguments seemed to be a belief that public denials of the existence of sexual harassment were based on a lack of knowledge and sensitivity to the real suffering of women. However, the gentleman's understanding

of, and distinction between, the terms *taḥarrush* and *mu'ākṣa* were not challenged and did not receive critical examination by HarassMap members.

Almost a decade earlier, when the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) began the first campaign against street sexual harassment in 2005, public reactions were similar to the gentleman's comments at the MasterPeace event. From the start, ECWR referred to the phenomenon of sexual harassment as *taḥarrush ginsy*, which met with confusion, embarrassment, anger, and most often denial. Salient elements of public feedback at the time were that *taḥarrush* did not exist in Egypt, that it was an American concept and an exact translation of the English term "sexual harassment" that could not be directly applied in the Egyptian context – which, incidentally, also arose in later contexts where HarassMap conducted outreach events – and that the word *taḥarrush* was, quite simply, too "big" to signify the phenomenon of catcalls, comments, stares, and even touching that were prevalent in the streets.

These examples demonstrate the tension that has existed, and continues to exist, around the naming of sexual harassment as *taḥarrush ginsy* and the framing of certain behaviors as forms of violence that violate women's rights. This chapter interrogates this tension and explores, 1) the shifting perceptions around the use of *taḥarrush ginsy* among the public through data derived from online Arabic discussion board forums over a 12-year time period that pre and post-dates ECWR's anti-sexual campaign, and 2) current conceptualizations of *taḥarrush* vis-a-vis *mu'ākṣa* existent in perceptions of Cairene residents derived from surveys deployed in three neighborhoods at differing socioeconomic levels. I argue here that the tension around *taḥarrush ginsy* in Egypt stems not from public misunderstandings and unsympathetic denials that women suffer from



unwanted attentions in the street that constrain their ability to freely move about and participate in public space. Instead, this chapter contends that public denials of sexual harassment are linked to the incomplete frame alignment of public perceptions and wider social norms with the new norms promoted in anti-sexual harassment discourses.

Data presented in this chapter will demonstrate a number of key trends in sexual harassment discourses. These include that historic discussions of sexual harassment, as *taḥarrush*, largely focus on molestation and rape, whether of children or women, in the private sphere of home or semi-private sphere of school, work and other locations. Certain high profile events in Egypt shifted the meaning of sexual harassment from a phenomenon that primarily occurred in private to the public sexual harassment targeting women in the streets as it is understood today. Additionally, the data from neighborhood surveys show that widespread public perceptions link *taḥarrush* mostly to physical behaviors, or verbal behaviors that acquire the weight of physical transgressions in their seriousness. Verbal behaviors, primarily, are associated with the more commonly used term *mu'ākṣa*. For reasons that will be discussed later, at the beginning of anti-sexual harassment activism, strategic decisions were made to not promote sexual harassment as *mu'ākṣa*. Despite this, the concept of *mu'ākṣa* appears to have more variable uses than the term *taḥarrush*, where violence is equally as visible in how the term is deployed as with the term *taḥarrush*. The connotations of rape and very serious sexual transgressions inherent in *taḥarrush* make it difficult for the public to accept that it can signify the everyday sexually harassing behaviors in the street that anti-sexual harassment initiatives promote. In this way, the efforts of anti-sexual harassment initiatives might be enhanced if conceptual reformulations of *mu'ākṣa* are similarly undertaken.

In the following sections, I first present the data from online Arabic discussion forums. Then I turn to some central themes elicited from street survey data, followed by a discussion of the trajectory of change of public perceptions and what this trajectory means for anti-sexual harassment activism.

### **Online Arabic Discussion Forums: The Multiple Meanings of *Taharrush Ginsy***

Internet access in Egypt became commercially available in 1996, with increased efforts made by the state to improve the country's satellite and fiber-optic infrastructure (Abdulla 2007). At this time, there were large pushes across the Middle East to improve connectivity and provide widespread Internet access to the public, though these early years of connectivity were, more generally, slow and expensive for most households to maintain, requiring not only the service but the hardware to connect to the Internet. Moreover, the interaction of Arabic-language users with the Internet was complicated by a number of factors. Chief among these state control and censorship of content and class and gendered barriers to access, with particular obstacles to rural connectivity (Bakkar 2006; Wheeler 2008). Abdulla (2007) noted that the late availability of Internet access in the region is thought by some to be an expression of government control over information. In the years following the commercial availability of the Internet, she highlighted a number of arrests of prominent online political activists, including Alaa Seif al-Islam Abdel Fattah, who suffered several instances of imprisonment since 2006 (including in 2015 under the new protest law that made any form of public assembly without formal permission a crime). Aouragh and Alexander (2011) further noted that during the Revolution, the government was able to shut down satellite and Internet

communications in their effort to interrupt the ability of opposition movements to use various media platforms to continue to foment protest in the streets, though this did not put an end to rising dissent. Since the Revolution, surveillance of opposition activists and attempts to censor various forms of online and offline media have continued under the government of El-Sisi (Hughes and Mubarak 2014). Yet, comparatively speaking, Egypt is far less repressive in its control of Internet access and use than other regimes in the Middle East, and many note that information and communication technologies have the power to destabilize corrupt regimes (Kalathil and Boas 2003). In addition, the Internet serves as a powerful medium through which social norms and values may be discussed, debated and refashioned in new ways (Loch et al. 2003; Lynch 2011).

Increasing Internet access in Egypt and the region as a whole made possible the growth of a “new media scene” comprised of wide range of voices and forms of interaction (Bakkar 2006). Within this, discussion forums and blog sites are a critical space in which public members are able to discussion a range of political as well as deeply personal issues. Research elsewhere notes how the anonymity possible via online platforms creates a “disinhibition effect,” where people are able to disconnect from who they are and from any perceived repercussions of revealing too much personal information (Suler 2004). Online space is increasingly critical for those working on a range of sensitive or taboo issues, especially those of a sexual nature. For sexuality-related problems, especially those revolving around violence, such as domestic abuse and rape that are connected to deep sentiments of shame, online space affords a pathway toward exposing the contours of such problems, providing victims a voice to make their experiences known and to receive support from others in similar situations, and even

giving law enforcement a better means to gauge criminal activity and devise improved strategies for combatting gender-based violence (Byrne et al. 2013). Arabic online forums provide such a space for public individuals concerned with the issue of *el-taharrush el-ginsy*. From almost the beginning of commercial access to the Internet, discussion board forums demonstrate the wide range of conversations on *taharrush* that unfolded between people across the Middle East, as well as key shifts in this discourse over time and location.

#### *Demographics and Distribution of Online Discussions of Taharrush*

Data derived from online Arabic discussion forums and blogsites between the years 2000-2012 provided longitudinal data of public sentiments on *taharrush ginsy*. Online data were utilized as a proxy for living communities, given that it was not possible to obtain such historic information via interviews. Discussion forums represented a unique archive, of sorts, in which to elicit insights about the way in which individuals and communities perceived the issue of *taharrush ginsy*. Using Google as the primary (free) search engine for data collection, 233 posts were located from 107 discussion forums and blog sites spanning 18 countries or areas in the Middle East and North Africa. Single posts ranged in length from short paragraphs to pages of text, with men and women almost equally represented among the sample, with 114 women and 107 men and 12 unknown. Discussion boards focused on health, religious and personal issues, often with people talking to each other on sensitive topics and/or receiving advice from professionals. Data from multiple Arabic speaking countries was included in this analysis largely given the paucity of online data from Egypt prior to 2005. The use of data from

across the region offered the ability to look at change comparatively and to make observations about conceptual changes happening inside of Egypt. Data generated from these posts offer critical preliminary, if not generalizable, insights into shifting discursive practices around sexual harassment in Egypt and the Arab World.

Critical changes have taken place in public conceptualizations of sexual harassment across the Middle East, but most particularly in Egypt. The distribution of posts across country of origin is shown in Figure 1. Points of origin for most posts were identified based on the stated country of the forum member or the national orientation of the discussion forum or blogsite itself. Where specific countries could not be found or national orientation of the site could not be determined, more general areas were listed, such as “Gulf,” which was often determined based on regional indicators or peculiarities of dialect inherent in the text of the posts. While listing countries in general terms is not ideal, it still points toward useful regional variations in conceptualizations around sexual harassment. Only 6 posts could not be easily identified based on these criteria and 2 posts came from Arab members based in Canada. As is evident in the figure, the majority

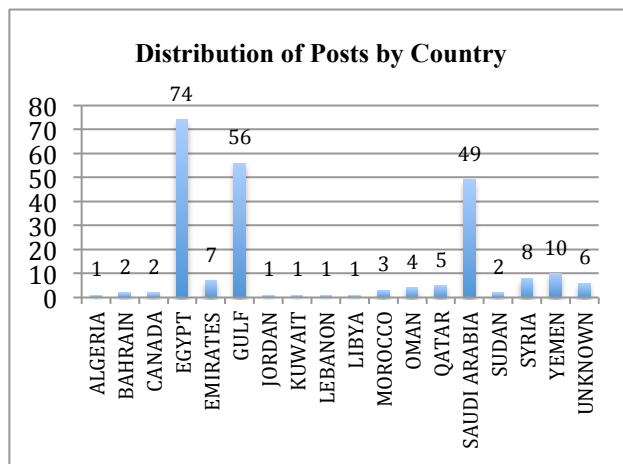


FIGURE 1: Distribution of All Posts by Country

of posts derived from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf area, representing 77% of the sample. Here, Gulf represents a conglomeration of potential countries lining the Persian Gulf, but it may be possible to presume that many of

these posts derive from Saudi nationals given their high rate of participation in online discussions. It is clear, though, that individuals from across the region participated in discussions of *taharrush ginsy*, although their prevalence is comparatively low when viewed against Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. For those most part, this suggests that Egypt and Saudi Arabia represent central loci for the development of national and cross-national discursive configurations of sexual harassment.

Figures 2 and 3 include the distribution of posts over time, Figure 2 for all of the posts from across the region and Figure 3 just for those posts originating from Egypt. Overall numbers of posts from year to year are relatively low, however, an increase in the discussions of *taharrush ginsy* in the region is apparent from 2004 and peak between 2005-2006, as noted in Figure 2. The number of posts then slowly decreases from 2007 but does not get as low as pre-2005 numbers. It is not clear why there are fewer posts prior to 2004, but possible explanations include that conversations about *taharrush ginsy* were rare or not happening in online communities, or that this data was not recoverable through Google. Moreover, more focused searches on individual discussion forum and blog sites did not take place across the more than 100 sites represented in this dataset, but individual forum searches were conducted with a limited number of Egyptian sites in order to capture as much data possible for this context. In Egypt, the discussion on *taharrush ginsy* mirrors the regional trend, to some extent. It is noticeable from 2003, but remains minimal until 2006. As shown in Figure 3, there are 7 posts in total between 2003-2005, which jumps to 21 in 2006 and represents a 200% increase in the discussion on sexual harassment between these years. A dip in the conversation occurs in 2009 but by 2011-2012 starts to pick up again.

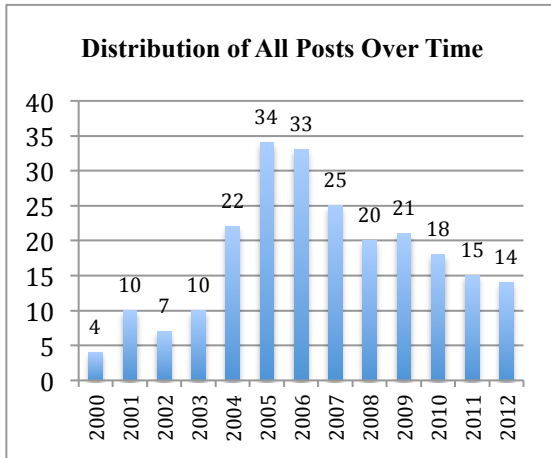


FIGURE 2: Distribution of All P osts by Year

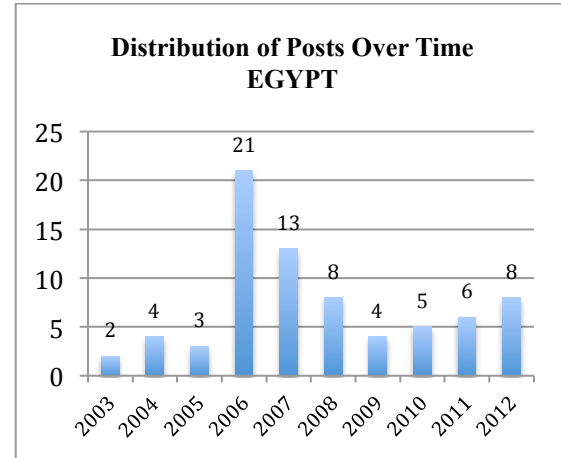


FIGURE 3: Distribution of Egyptian Posts By Year

### *Thematic Content of Discussions on Taharrush*

All posts were analyzed for thematic content and a codebook developed in order to code and quantify the prevalence of certain themes in the text of people’s sentiments and conversations. Twelve codes, which correspond to major themes, emerged from these posts, with another 10 sub-codes. A single post received multiple codes, depending on the nature of the discussion, which often cut across a range of issues. This resulted in 670 coded instances across 233 posts. Table 1 details the codes and Table 2 the sub-codes that emerged from discussion forum and blog site posts. Sub-codes were linked to individual codes, such that when the code was evident then the sub-code could also be identified. Sub-codes were not utilized independent of their parent code. For instance, there were 4 sub-codes for the code “Sexual Harassment of Women.” When this code was identified, then a sub-code identifying whether the harassment took place at work, in public (the streets, transportation, etc.), in the home, or at another location. The most prevalent “other” location was the doctor’s office. The same was true for the code “Child

**Table 1**

Codes/Themes from Posts Across the Middle East and North Africa Region

	Total Coded Raw Number	Total Coded Frequency
Code/Theme N=233		
Child Molestation & Rape	132	57%
Sexual Harassment of Women	98	42%
Rape	19	8%
Muaksa	18	8%
Zina (Illicit/Consensual Sex)	22	9%
Teen/Youth Sexual Exploration	10	4%
Parental Responsibility	82	35%
Homosexuality/Sexual Deviation	70	30%
Sexual Harassment of Men	7	3%
State Violence	4	2%
Power/Authority/Control	10	4%
Mob Assault	6	3%
Total Codes	478	

**Table 2**

Sub-Codes/Themes For Women and Children Only

	Total Coded Raw Number	Total Coded Frequency
CHILDREN, N=132		
Incest	51	13%
Servants/Domestic Help	17	26%
Schools/Other Public Venues	34	5%
Neighbors	7	2%
Religious Leaders	2	74%
Total	111	
WOMEN, N=98		
Workplace	19	19%
Public	41	42%
Domestic/Family	15	15%
Other Location	6	6%
Total	81	



Molestation and Rape,” in which there were 5 sub-codes: 1) incest, where the sexual harassment occurred with a family member, such as father, brother, uncle, or grandfather, 2) servants and domestic help, which often included drivers and maids, 3) in schools or other public venues, 4) with neighbors, and 5) with religious leaders, usually in mosques.

Women and children represent two highly prevalent thematic areas in the discussion of *taharrush ginsy*. As highlighted in Table 1, 57% of all posts were coded as child molestation/rape and 42% as the sexual harassment of women. Egypt shows an inverse trend in with a higher focus on the sexual harassment of women at 66% and child molestation/rape at 32%. As will be discussed, this trend is potentially linked to anti-sexual harassment efforts that began in 2005. Salient elements of the discussion around the most salient themes on children and women include:

Child Molestation/Rape – This code represented more than half of the conversations that were located on *taharrush ginsy* across the region. In these conversations, there was overwhelming concern with child sexual assault within families, followed by schools and, with particular reference to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, the assault on children by domestic employees, such as drivers and maids. *Taharrush ginsy* in this context was viewed as both a violation of children’s bodies, but also an act with devastating consequences for children. This is especially the case for the molestation and rape of young boys, where fears were evident that such an act would lead to perceived sexual deviance, such as homosexuality, sodomy, and masturbation. Child molestation/rape and homosexuality co-occur more than any other two codes that were analyzed, with the exception of child-molestation/rape and parental awareness/ responsibility. Within this

context, posts often exhorted parents to not leave children alone unguarded, to teach their children unacceptable forms of touching, and offered advice and support to those whose children had been the victims of sexual molestation and rape.

Sexual Harassment of Women – This was also a prevalent theme in discussions of *taḥarrush ginsy*, representing almost half of posts region-wide, and two-thirds of the posts from Egypt. It is important here to note that this theme overlapped significantly with the molestation and rape of children, where many discussions focused on the abuse of young girls, in particular by fathers, stepfathers, uncles, cousins, and in some cases grandfathers and brothers. As part of this, there were divergent trends in the discussion on women, focused both their sexual abuse at home and work and sexual harassment in public settings, most especially in the street or on transportation. In Egypt, the majority of posts focused on women's public sexual harassment, while moving about in the streets and on transportation. Most often, this was described as physical in nature, including touching, rubbing, and groping. However, verbal harassment that was vulgar and sexual in orientation also arose in online conversations. Individuals debated the role of dress in promoting sexual harassment, with many placing the blame on women for going out without the minimal protection of *hijāb*, or the headscarf. In the workplace, discussions centered on women's lack of power, being propositioned by bosses, and leaving employment to avoid further unwanted advances.

Beyond these two dominant themes around *taḥarrush ginsy*, others were also critical. Rape arose in conversations and was viewed as a problem in families, schools and the workplace. It was sometimes linked to homosexuality, particularly where rape

and sexual harassment targeted young boys or men. This theme was also connected to the public sexual harassment of women, where individuals debated the role clothing underlying the problem and argued it to be a psychological disease. Moreover, *zinā*, or adultery and illicit sexual relationships, emerged as significant, notably in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. Such relations were usually presented as a consensual, if a negative and demoralizing, practice.

*Mu'ākṣa*, or flirtation, similarly came up in discussions. Though a largely Egyptian term, it appears in its noun form “*el-mu'ākṣa*” or in a verbal form, “*t'ākis*” in three posts from Saudi Arabia, three from the Gulf, and one from Qatar. For instance, a self-identified Saudi male participant on the discussion forum *al-Ḥayā al-Zawjiyya* (Married Life), explored who he felt to be responsible for sexual harassment, arguing that the blame did not rest on girls for the “*taṣarafāt al-shāb al-shādha wa mumarāstu lil-mu'ākṣa wa al-taḥarrush*” (flirting and harassing behaviors of abnormal men). *Mu'ākṣa* overwhelmingly co-occurred with the code for the sexual harassment of women. As visible from the Saudi post, it was often used synonymously with *taḥarrush* but was also presented in multiple and conflicting ways. It was a reference for physical forms of sexual harassment, rape and sexual relations, and was also used to denote verbal harassment and compliments to women.

Power, control and authority were likewise important talking points, especially in Egypt, and included critiques of the authoritarian system, patriarchal society, women's vulnerability and inferiority to men, women's fear of being fired, and social blame placed on women for their sexual harassment. Lastly, the sexual harassment of men, that was not connected to the abuse of young boys, could limitedly be found in some conversations

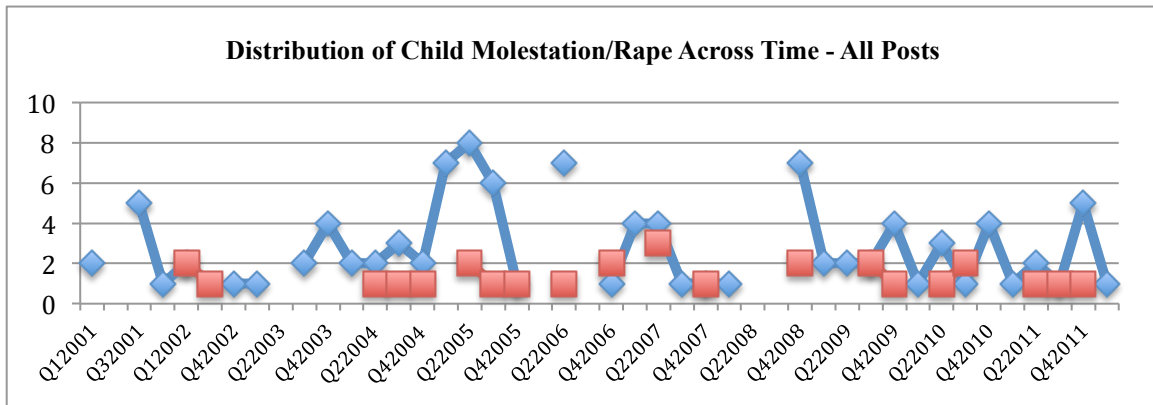


FIGURE 4: Distribution of All Posts Coded as “Child Molestation” (Blue) and “Child Rape” (Red) By Year

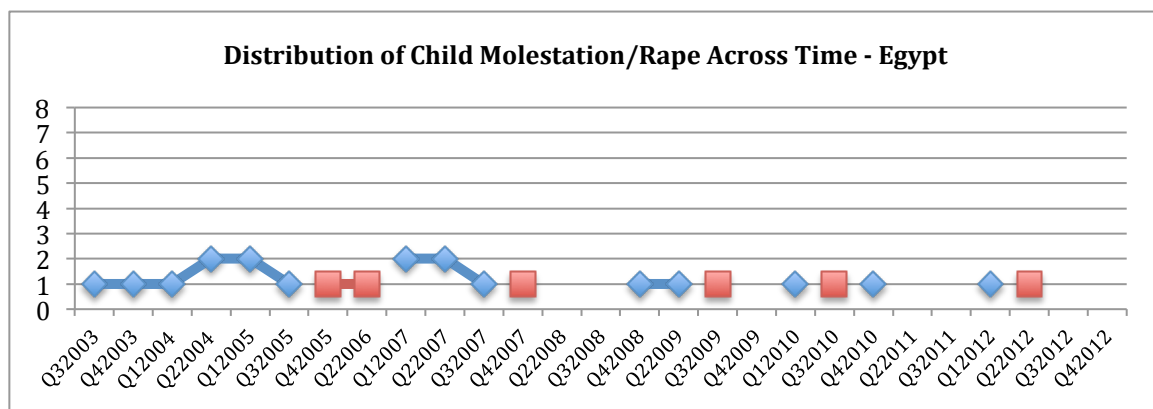


FIGURE 5: Distribution of Egyptian Posts Coded as “Child Molestation” (Blue) and “Child Rape” (Red) By Year

that recognized that women could be harassers, but more often still linked harassed men to homosexuality.

### *Temporal Shifts in Discussions of Taharrush*

Exploring the distribution of these codes over time, a number of trends are visible that provide valuable insights on changing conceptualizations of *taharrush ginsy*. Figure 4 demonstrates the prevalence of child molestation and rape throughout the majority of the 12-year timespan under analysis, with peaks in online discussions between 2005 and then again in 2009. In general, conversations on *taharrush* appeared to proliferate around

2005 and this theme was (and remained) a consistent feature of evolving discourses through this time period. Figure 5 shows that this distribution also holds true for Egypt, where, from 2003-2012, child molestation/rape remains a present, if only a very small, part of the dialogue on *taḥarrush ginsy*. Egypt does not experience the same peaks that occur across the region, for which there may be several explanations. It is possible that child molestation was not as significant a problem in the imagination of Egyptians as elsewhere, therefore limiting this aspect of the discourse on *taḥarrush*. Given the widespread concerns around the molestation of children by domestic help in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, it's possible that this became a trope in discourses of sexual violence in that part of the region. Alternatively, it is possible that the taboo nature of child sexual abuse in Egypt was also something that people did not feel comfortable enough to discuss more widely, even in online forums.

In Figure 6, the sexual harassment of women in posts from across the region also spans the majority of the time range, but prior to 2002 it was not part of the discourse on *taḥarrush ginsy*. When it became visible in 2002, public concern was initially on incest and the assault on girls and young women by male relatives, women's vulnerability in the

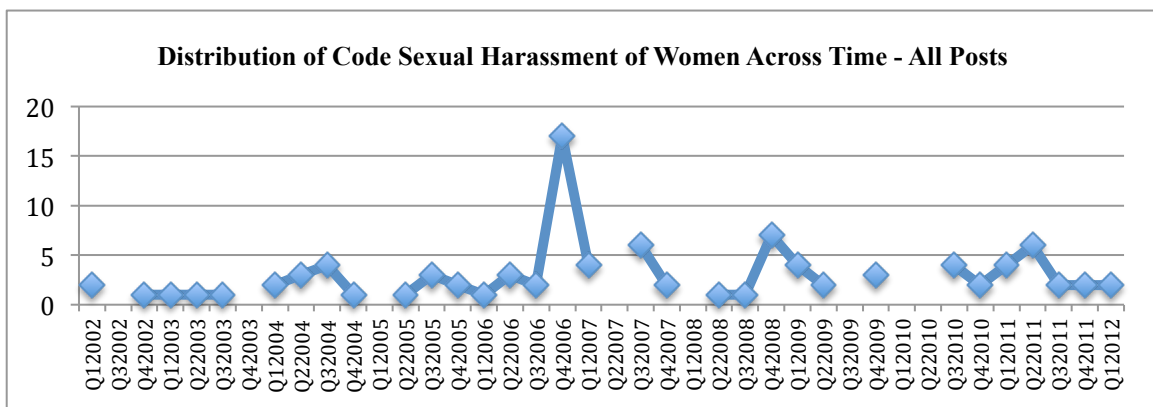


FIGURE 6: Distribution of All Posts Coded as "Sexual Harassment of Women" by Year (Year Distributed in Quarters)

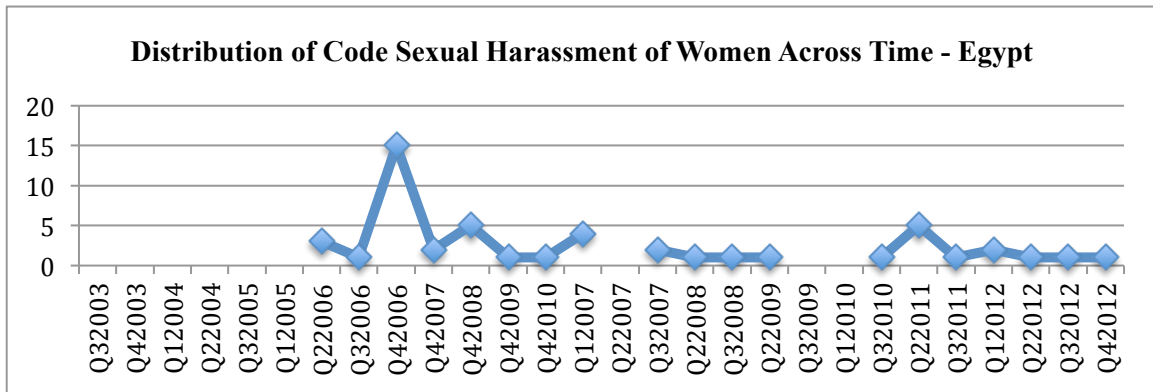


FIGURE 7: Distribution of Egyptian Coded as “Sexual Harassment of Women” by Year (Year Distributed in Quarters)

workplace and in hospitals, and even the harassment and rape of females at Abu Ghraib prison. In October 2006, a dramatic peak in conversations about sexual harassment of women occurs, with the majority of such posts deriving from Egypt. Figure 7 illustrates that 15 of the 17 posts referencing the sexual harassment of women in this month derive from Egypt. At this point, *taḥarrush ginsy* came to signify the street sexual harassment and mob violence that occurred around the Eid al-Fitr holiday. As noted in previous chapters, the Eid mob harassment that took place in downtown Cairo and that has since become a yearly ritual, generated a wide degree of attention in the Egyptian blogosphere, which was similarly matched by public deliberations via discussion forums on the event (Rifaat 2008; Rizzo et al. 2012). It is from this historic moment that sexual harassment targeting women in the streets became a vital part of how *taḥarrush ginsy* was conceptualized. From 2006 on, the conversations on *taḥarrush* in Egypt primarily center on women in public space, and most often on transportation. This was interlaced with the continued yet miniscule use of *taḥarrush* to refer to child sexual assault, as well as fluctuating use with respect to rape and *mu‘āksa*. Outside of Egypt, child sexual assault still dominated conversations on *taḥarrush*. Though, even in the rest of the Arab region,

Egyptian uses of *taḥarrush* to reference the public sexual harassment of women have begun to infuse the discourse, such that there appear to be two parallel uses for the term outside of Egypt.

*Discussion: Reconceptualizing Taḥarrush in Egypt*

Returning now to the example at the outset of this paper, how does online discussion forum and blog site data help to explain the shifting uses of *taḥarrush ginsy*? Historically, *taḥarrush ginsy* in the popular imagination across the region has been intrinsically associated with and understood as child sexual assault and rape, largely occurring in the privacy of home and often committed by trusted individuals. Here, *taḥarrush* was overwhelmingly viewed as the physical violation of the body and was frequently a reference for rape. Moreover, child sexual abuse, particularly that of boys but in some cases of girls, generated high levels of anxiety that *taḥarrush* would result later in psychological problems and sexually deviant practices, such as homosexuality, that would negatively impact children's lives. When applied to women in all settings, private and public, this term conveyed similar notions of violence, violation, exploitation, illicitness and demoralization, with long lasting consequences.

In 2005, when ECWR began addressing street sexual harassment targeting women in Egypt, *taḥarrush*, *mu'ākṣa*, *zīna*, and rape, as well as child molestation, were part of a nebulous constellation of sexually deviant practices with loose and obscured terminological borders. According to Nehad Aboul Komsan, the Director of ECWR, *taḥarrush* was a harsh term that people often conflated with rape (Interview February 2014). *mu'ākṣa*, which was (and still is) more commonly deployed and understood to

describe attentions directed toward women in the street (whether seemingly wanted or not), was not a term that had mobilizational power. As noted by Ryzova, *mu'āksa* was popularly understood as “a communication code, a more or less ritualized performance of courtship,” which always occurred in public in Egypt’s loosely gender-segregated society, and was always seemingly consensual with the *bint al-balad* knowing how to flaunt her charms to attract men (2005: 108) Aboul Komsan stated that there was a level of tolerance for *mu'āksa* given its widespread association with teasing, flirting and courtship and that nobody could or would ever see *mu'āksa* as a crime. The criminalization of harassing behaviors prevalent in the street, such as catcalls, comments, following/stalking, and touching, was the end goal of ECWR efforts, along with widespread social perceptions that these behaviors were, somehow, non-threatening, non-problematic, a public form of courtship, and the normal actions of libidinous men in an economically depressed and sexually repressed society. *Taḥarrush ginsy* provided the conceptual power ECWR and other civil society entities since have needed to reshape public perceptions around ostensibly benign yet sexualized street behaviors, turning them instead into violent, violating, and criminal bodily practices.

### **Public Perceptions of *Taḥarrush Ginsy* as Visible in Three Cairene Neighborhoods**

Despite almost a decade of activism, the connection between the discourses of anti-sexual harassment entities and the shifting public perceptions around sexual harassment is not very clear. As discussed, prior to this activism, *taḥarrush* was associated with sexually violent practices that usually involved rape and molestation, whether of children or women at home, school, work or in other places by individuals



known or close to them. Anti-sexual harassment activism sought to deploy this term to describe the everyday forms of sexual harassment prevalent in the streets and perpetrated by strangers, including catcalls, comments, stares, and touching/groping. Essentially, these behaviors ranged from the non-physical verbal (unwanted) interactions all the way up to rape, but not including rape, for the most part. Notwithstanding a number of prior public campaigns designed to solidify definitions, anti-sexual harassment discourses have not always been clear that rape and harassment are differing, even if connected, forms of sexual violence. The mass assaults and rapes that occurred in Tahrir Square, in addition to other high profile cases, further complicate what is understood under the appellation of *taḥarrush ginsy*, where the boundaries between sexual harassment and rape continue to be blurred. Moreover, the circuits through which various discourses on sexual harassment have traveled, whether via the Internet, television, personal networks, etc., provides another confounding element to how the public understands *taḥarrush* and the degree to which such understandings can be attributed to the work of the anti-sexual harassment initiatives.

In this section, public perceptions of sexual harassment are explored, though this project makes no specific claims as to the modes through which the public arrived at its current perceptions. This information is offered here for two primary reasons, 1) as a more generalized measure against which to view the potential success of anti-sexual harassment initiatives in driving discursive agendas, though, again, no distinct causal relationship between activism and public perceptions is assumed, and 2) to understand how the strategic use of *taḥarrush* as a signifier for the public sexual harassment of women muddies the ability of anti-sexual harassment entities to combat everyday forms

of sexual harassment prevalent in the streets, particularly given its historic uses as described above. In order to assess public sentiments, 156 surveys were conducted in the streets of three Cairene neighborhoods. Neighborhoods were chosen along socio-economic lines to examine possible class variation in perspectives. These neighborhoods were the lower socioeconomic area of Masaken Zilzal, the middle class area of Shubra Masr, and the upscale area of Heliopolis. Additionally, surveys were deployed to men and women equally in each neighborhood, as well as distributed across two age groups of younger individuals between 18-25 and older individuals between 26-40. Thematic content of the surveys were elicited as a means of arriving at the two goals stated above.

A team of 6 Egyptian students and professional researchers were hired by this project to deploy surveys. Given the sensitive nature of sexual harassment, as well as the long held suspicion that sexual harassment is a foreign conceptual import, it was important to ensure that data collection was not compromised by the presence of a foreign national. Surveys consisted of open-ended questions and were conducted in interview-style with passers-by in the streets, which were voice recorded. In general, survey responses were brief, on average 5-6 minutes, but because people were given leeway to simply speak their responses, in some cases fast talkers provided a great deal of information. Those a little more shy or reticent with the topic offered only succinct and not very detailed answers to questions. For the most part, people were in between activities and were anxious to move on, so question responses likely reflect immediate thoughts that came to mind. Respondents were probed on what they thought *taharrush ginsy* was, as well as what they thought the difference was between *taharrush* and *mu'aksa*, if any. Immediately apparent for the responses on *taharrush* across class,

gender and age are the same set of eleven themes that continuously reoccur, though there are variations in the prevalence of certain themes for each of the three sample sets. Two of the eleven themes are most ubiquitous, and include physical touching/grabbing and verbal comments. The physical/verbal distinction represents an important conceptual divide in public understandings of *taḥarrush*. As described below:

Physical Touching/Grabbing – This theme includes some form of physical act upon the body of, usually, a woman in public. It included items that were generically detailed as touching, which most frequently included terms such as “*mid/yimid īdo*” (he extended/extends his hand), “*yihot īdo*” (he puts his hand on), and “*el-lems/lemis-ha*” (touching/he touches her). In these responses, individuals provided very little information about the nature of such touching, but it was overwhelmingly clear that any form of contact was considered a form *taḥarrush*. Additionally, however, other forms of touching that arose included “*yikhabuṭ-ha*” (he bumps into her), “*yilzāq fiha/el-taznīq*” (he gropes her/groping), “*yimasik-ha*” or “*yished-ha*” (he grabs/pulls at her), “*yīḥas-ha*” (he feels her), and also “*yitharrash gasady*” (he physically harasses). At times, respondents were also more descriptive in noting that the touching centered on “*ṣidraha*” (her chest) or “*riglaha*” (her leg), this usually on transportation when women sit next to men that touch them, or some “*manāṭiq khuṣusiyya/ḥasassiyya*” (private/sensitive areas).

Verbal Comments –Here, respondents noted that *taḥarrush* included a range of verbalizations that were usually unwanted or problematic, in some way. Descriptions of such kinds of verbalizations included “*al-fādh khārga*” (outside/unacceptable words),

“*kalam mish kwayyis*” (bad words), “*kalam mish muḥtaram*” (disrespectful words), “*byḍayiq ‘ha bil-kalam*” (he bothers her with talking), “*taḥarrush lafdhy*” (verbal harassment), and “*al-fādh sāi ‘a*” (bad/faulty words), among many others. Additionally, it was common for individuals to treat comments as violating and/or equally as serious as a physical altercation. For instance, people often referred to verbalizations as “*y ‘atidy bil-fādh*” or “*‘atadā’ lafdhy*” (verbal assault), “*al-kalam al-khadsch lil-hyā’*” (indecent/dishonoring words), or “*yuwadhiha bi aya kalam*” (he’ll hurt her with any words). Hurting the feelings of women was considered a form of assault that many argued was *taḥarrush*. However, in general, most of the descriptions of verbal comments were very vague and most often detailed simply as “*al-fādh*” or “*kalam*” (words/comments), sometimes described as “*bil-lisān*” (of the tongue) or “*bil-boq*” (of the mouth). One interesting way of describing verbalizations by a small number of respondents was as a form of “*mu ‘āksa laṭifa*” (light *mu ‘āksa*), “*mu ‘āksa lafdhy*” (verbal *mu ‘āksa*), or “*mu ‘āksa bil-boq*” (*mu ‘āksa* of the mouth), where it appears that *mu ‘āksa* was considered synonymous with some conceptualization of *taḥarrush*.

The other themes that arose, that are no less important than physical or verbal aspects of *taḥarrush*, include a range of both behaviors and perceptions of the practice overall. Very briefly, these themes are:

Violent Behaviors - “*Ighṭaṣāb*” (rape), “*‘atadā’*” (assault) and “*ḍarb*” (beating/hitting) arose across the three areas among many individuals, with the exception of older men in the lower class area of Masaken Zilsal and middle class neighborhood Shubra Masr, older

and younger women in Shubra Masr, and younger women in the upscale area of Heliopolis, where there are no respondents that list this as an aspect of *taḥarrush*.

Annoy/Bully – In one-way or another, “*yīḍayiq-ha*” or “*muḍayiqā*” (he annoys her or annoyance) was commonly utilized by all groupings of respondents to express how *taḥarrush* was unwanted, or the physical and verbal interactions were displeasing and upsetting to the woman in question. This was also interspersed with terms that have been synonymous with flirting or teasing, such as “*y ‘akis-ha*”, “*mu ‘āksa*”, or “*yirāzalha*,” yet in this context of describing *taḥarrush* did not appear benign. Moreover, in a few instances, individuals directly indicated that men would “*yibaltag-ha*” (bully her).

Gaze – The gaze was another significant theme that arose. Frequently cited actions in this category included such items as “*al-naẓra*” (the gaze), “*al- ‘aīn*” (the eye), “*‘atadā ‘baṣry*” (visual assault), and “*baṣa mish kwayyisa*” (bad looks). It was also clear that problems with the gaze centered on the way in which they involved certain parts of the female body and were sexual in nature, such as “*baṣas ‘ala ḥeta mish kwayyisa*” (staring at a bad area) or “*nizām baṣat ginsiyyan*” (system of sexual gazing). One young man from Masaken Zilzal noted that “*illy byboṣ dilwaqty al-shabab ‘aīniha tikhorm al-ḥedum*” (the young men’s eyes that are looking now burn holes in the clothes). Even “*ibtisam*” (smiling) limitedly emerged as a feature of this theme.

Nearness/Getting Closer – Even without physical touching someone, sometimes just the act of getting close enough to make this possible was deemed inappropriate and,

therefore, a form of *taharrush*. A number of references were made to men who “*yiwaqif-ha fi al-shar‘a*” (stop her in the street), “*yigy ganbaha*” (come next to her), “*yiqarab minha*” or “*yiqarab al-bint*” (get close to her/the girl), or “*‘ad ganbaha*” (sitting next to her).

Generic Actions/Movements – Where people attempted to make a distinction between the verbal and the physical, they sometimes described *taharrush* as some form of action or movement of the body. Here, such actions or movements were more generally stated as “*f‘al*” (action, or doing something), “*haraka mish kwayyisa*” (bad move), or “*tariqa mish kwayyisa*” (bad way). There was no other descriptive quality to such movements and appeared only to set *taharrush* apart from the verbalizations.

Following – To a lesser extent, people described *taharrush* as following or stalking, which contradicts the quantitative survey data produced by ECWR, UN Women and HarassMap, demonstrating that women identified stalking and following as a prevalent aspect of *taharrush* – 87% of women in the UN Women study identified this as sexual harassment, whereas HarassMap reported that almost 50% of their survey respondents indicated having been stalked/followed (El-Deeb 2013; Hassan et al. 2008; Fahmy et al. 2014). The qualitative survey data for this project does not contradict such frequencies, but appears to indicate that it is not the first thing that people think of when quickly defining what sexual harassment means to them. In this case, people sparingly indicated that *taharrush* included men that “*yigry waraha*” (run after her) or “*yilif hawaleyki*” (circle around you).

Immoral/Abnormal – A highly prevalent aspect of respondent definitions of *taharrush* focused on the immorality or strangeness of the act. In some cases, this morality drew on historic gendered norms that placed shame on sexual transgressions. For instance, people noted that *taharrush* was when men “*yikhadsch ‘aleyha*” (“rake” her, or is indecent upon her), “*yihatik wahida*” (degrades her), or was “*f‘al faḍah*” (an outrage, to her honor), “*ḥaram*” (forbidden) and “*mish ḥilal*” (not sanctioned). Additionally, people frequently referred to *taharrush* as “*wisakha*” (filthy/dirty), “*ḥāga ghariba*” (something strange), “*gheer ‘ādiyya*” (not normal), or “*shadh ginsiyyan*” (sexually aberrant), among many other similar comments that highlighted its position as something unclean and wrong.

Sex/Lust – One interesting and highly prevalent theme, particularly among almost all younger men and women, is the association of *taharrush* with sex. Here, there was a great deal of discussion that men were full of pent up desires that needed some form of release, which then lead to inappropriate attentions directed at strange women in public. For example, the notion of “*shahwa*” (lust) arose in a number of responses, along with that of “*ghariza*” (instinct). Sexual desire, here, is given primal status in men, who are looking for sexual liaisons. Statements like, “*‘āyyīz yimaris-ha*” (he wants to “do” her), “*‘yiwaṣal-ha l’marḥālla m ‘āshara kamila*” (he wants to have complete relations – sex - with her), “*al-gins huwwa shaghal*” (sex is at work), and “*el-sokhaniyya bayn al-rigalla wa al-bint*” (the heat between men and the girl) were common. While transgressive, people generally argued that the inability for men to marry and have sanctioned intercourse made *taharrush* a problem for all women in public.

Violation of Rights – This theme also arose to a lesser extent and included comments, such as “*yintaḥak ḥāga*” (he violates something), “*t’ady ala ḥaq’ al-shakhs*” (an assault on personal rights), and “*t’ady ala khususiyyāt*” (an assault on privacy). This was more frequently referenced by upper class men and women and less so in places like Shubra Masr or Masaken Zilzal. Only one young man from Masaken Zilzal made any reference to *taharrush* as the invasion of privacy.

#### *Gender-Based Differences in Survey Responses*

What is immediately noticeable is a binary fissure between the physical and the verbal when looking at gendered responses to *taharrush*. Overwhelmingly, men of all classes and age groups viewed *taharrush* as a physical act, where touching in some form had to occur. However, upper class men tended to give equal weight to the physical and verbal aspects of *taharrush*, whereas in Masaken Zilzal and Shubra Masr men of all ages were much less likely to view any verbal interaction as a possible feature of *taharrush*. Men, in general, defined *taharrush* as connected to the body in some way, either through direct contact, as the object of male sexual desire, or, in small measure, through more violent forms of interaction, such as assault and rape. Women from all areas and age groups, on the other hand, gave almost equal weight to the physical and verbal aspects of sexual harassment. They were also more prone to discussing verbal harassment in terms akin to that of physical harassment, where words and comments could hurt their feelings, assault, violate and degrade. Moreover, the annoying and bullying aspect of *taharrush* was similarly as salient for most groups of women, whereas the violent assaults were not



discussed much. Some women, particularly older women in Heliopolis, did note that *taharrush* was a preparatory stage for more violent acts. However, it appears more the urgent concern for women was the day-to-day sexual harassment they faced.

### *Class-Based Differences in Survey Responses*

Generally speaking, there seemed to be very little horizontal difference among respondents. People in all three neighborhoods appeared to hold similar perspectives on what constituted *taharrush*. Perhaps the only immediately visible difference in the responses along class lines is the degree to which men and women in the upper class neighborhood of Heliopolis promoted the notion of *taharrush* as a violation of a person's rights. Such deliberations were not present in the responses of any individuals from Masaken Zilzal or Shubra Masr. Whether this means that there was less consciousness in middle and lower income areas of *taharrush* as a violation of women's rights, however, is unclear. People were not probed more deeply on their conception of rights, so it is possible that in the context of the street where these surveys were conducted, this was not something people immediately considered. Even among those in Heliopolis, *taharrush* as a violation of rights was not a dominant feature of responses, at least among men. It was a more discernible line of discussion among upper class women, which does suggest that among this class of individuals the violation of women's rights was a larger concern. In their analysis of interview and focus group data, Fahmy et al. (2014) noted that, while rights-based considerations were visible among all classes of women, upper class female participants in their study were particularly prone to speaking about their rights. The survey data in this study seems to offer corroborating evidence of Fahmy et al's findings.

### *Age-Based Differences in Survey Responses*

Younger men and women across all three neighborhoods were inclined to connect *taharrush* with male sexual desire. In particular, there seemed to be an existing tension among young men across all classes between seeing *taharrush* as an unfortunate yet, perhaps, unproblematic expression of pent up male desire and those who recognized it to be very wrong, despite the sexual repression of men in Egypt. Even among young women in Masaken Zilzal and Shubra Masr, there was some limited recognition that men were sexual beings and that sexual harassment was the natural, even if improper, release of male sexual frustration. This was not present at all among upper class young women or any of the older women across neighborhoods. When such responses arose among women they did not outweigh the heavier focus on other aspects of *taharrush* that had a denigrating and limiting impact on them as a class. Moreover, there was a lack of any discussion of sexuality and lust from older men in all three neighborhoods. In fact, the responses from these men were geared more toward moralizing and discussing *taharrush* as an aberrant social practice. The implications of this are somewhat ambiguous. In part, prior survey data from ECWR, UN Women, and HarassMap indicate that men of all ages sexually harassed women. HarassMap messaging campaigns also underscore how sexual repression, as a reason for sexual harassment, is a myth largely because older, married men sexually harassed. Yet, the absence of any focus on sex and lust among this age grouping of respondents may indicate one of a couple of things.

It must be conceded that given the small sample size, there may be an issue with sampling bias that is obstructing a better understanding of the perspectives of older men. This is a distinct possibility, given that older men represent only 78 total respondents.

However, in their analysis of the number of interviews necessary to reach theme saturation in non-probabilistic sampling, Guest et al. (2006) noted that anything more than 13-18 interviews did not significantly increase the number of identifiable themes in interview data. Given this, it might be possible to assume that sampling bias is not an issue here. It is further possible that, as a subset of the male population, older men may be less sexually repressed, less focused on sexual release, and, therefore, less inclined to sexually harass. Here, marriage may have offered men the pathway toward sexual satisfaction valued and supported by Islamically inspired systems of gender. Of the sample of older married men, only 4 had never been married while the rest were either married with children or divorced. However, this explanation rests on an implicit acceptance that the reproduction of sexual harassment is driven by sexual desire, which runs counter to extensive theoretical arguments that ground sexual harassment in uneven imbalances of power and expressions of male control. It is also possible, and maybe more probable, that given their station in life, older men may outwardly position themselves in particular ways, as somehow more moral, principled, and concerned with the ethical problems around sexual harassment, thus obscuring any association they might have otherwise made between *taḥarrush* and sex.

*Revisiting Mu'āksa and Taḥarrush: Disrupting the Flirtatious Nature of Mu'āksa*

Survey responses on the concept of *taḥarrush* present a fairly varied picture, where there has been noticeable change from historic terminological deployments centered on the molestation and rape of children, homosexuality and workplace sexual harassment of women. Overwhelmingly, Egyptians now view *taḥarrush* as some set of

behaviors directed at women in the public space. The above discussion highlights how *taḥarrush* has come to signify both physical and verbal altercations, in addition to a suite of other behaviors. Yet, there are a few issues that are important to note with this. In one respect, new perceptions of *taḥarrush* appear to cohere with anti-sexual harassment discourses, in which commonplace behaviors in the street are increasingly absorbed into new understandings of *taḥarrush*, such as comments, catcalls, stares and stalking/following, in addition to a range of physical behaviors that extend to, but usually do not exceed, rape. Taken alone, this data on how people define *taḥarrush* offer a new ideoscape of increasingly expanding understandings in which sexual harassment encompasses a range of behaviors from the arguably trivial, but unwanted, to the more detrimental and even dangerous. However, a more thorough probing of people's perceptions of the differences between *mu'ākṣa* and *taḥarrush* illustrate a more perplexing picture of evolving conceptualizations.

When asked what, if any, difference existed between *mu'ākṣa* and *taḥarrush*, a very low percentage of people indicated that there was no difference between the two concepts. Only 10 of 78 men (13%) and 20 of 78 women (26%) noted that *mu'ākṣa* was a form of *taḥarrush* (*nuṣa min anwṣa el- taḥarrush*), and that both were part of the same system of inappropriate behaviors directed at women. Despite this, many of these individuals claimed that *mu'ākṣa* was usually a verbal action (*al-kalam*) while *taḥarrush* was primarily physical in nature (*al-lems*). For the majority of the respondents, men and women overwhelmingly, in all areas and age groups, distinguished *mu'ākṣa* and *taḥarrush* into this binary verbal - physical scheme. Many argued that both complements and verbal harassment that was bad or filthy could be classified as *mu'ākṣa*. However,

among women, there appeared to be some confusion as filthy comments cut across *mu'ākṣa* and *taḥarrush*. Women would note that comments, whether good or bad should be considered a form of *mu'ākṣa*, but that bad comments were also a type of *taḥarrush*. Yet, even in such cases, women largely claimed that *taḥarrush* was mostly physical touching and did not extend to the verbal. Concomitant with this, respondents deemed *taḥarrush* as something more than *mu'ākṣa*, where the differences between the two were “*shās 'a*” (vast) and “*kabīr*” (big). *Taḥarrush* was viewed as fundamentally more violent, and therefore it was challenging for many to claim that behaviors associated with *mua'kṣa* could also be labeled *taḥarrush*.

This verbal - physical opposition paralleled other binary assemblages visible in people's responses. These included far - close, respectful - impolite, normal – abnormal, simple - egregious, and desexualized - sexual oppositional pairings. Accordingly, *mu'ākṣa* was often defined as something that happened “*min b 'eīd*” (from afar) that did not act directly upon the body like *taḥarrush*. Largely seen as complementary, people noted that there was an element of niceness to *mu'ākṣa*, even though many also claimed that mean and unwanted comments were a form of *mu'ākṣa*. However, there was a perceived severity to *taḥarrush* that even the meanest form of *mu'ākṣa* could not reach. *Mu'ākṣa* was “*haaga 'ādiyya*” (normal) and *taḥarrush* was something strange, even a disease of some sort. More importantly, because it was not directly linked to the body in the way of *taḥarrush*, *mu'ākṣa* was set apart as not being sexual in orientation. Instead it was often an act of admiration without the attached connotation of illicitness.

Yet, regardless of this polarity in meaning, most respondents made use of *mu'ākṣa* when asked to define *taḥarrush*. Without conscious consideration of any

difference between the two concepts, respondents drew on *mu'ākṣa* in order to highlight street behaviors they felt to be problematic. In this case, *mu'ākṣa* was synonymous with *taḥarrush*, which is also a common occurrence in everyday parlance. On the surface of it, therefore, the relationship and distinction between the two are then more vague and ostensibly problematic. How can this conflation of *mu'ākṣa* and *taḥarrush* be understood in light of the above discussion that highlights critical distinctions between these concepts? There may several reasons to explain why it is that *mu'ākṣa* is referenced in place of *taḥarrush* in quotidian discourse, notwithstanding untested assumptions that *mu'ākṣa* is more palatable a concept than *taḥarrush* or that they have always meant the same thing. *mu'ākṣa* increasingly exists in a larger sphere of almost interchangeably used terms. For instance, “*mu'ākṣa lafdhy*,” (verbal flirting) “*taḥarrush lafdhy*” (verbal harassment) and “*'atada' lafdhy*” (verbal assault) all arose to similarly define *taḥarrush*. Each of these terms engages with varying aspects of sexualized violence to illustrate how verbal comments deeply impact female victims. They also demonstrate the degree to which the underlying meanings around *mu'ākṣa* are shifting. While remaining a transgressive verbal act, its historically benign, teasing, and unproblematically flirtatious nature is coming into contestation. In addition, it may be possible to assert that *mu'ākṣa* and *taḥarrush* are beginning to assume similar levels of gravity, even if they aren't actually aligned in meaning. People are far more willing to accept verbal behaviors as a form of *taḥarrush* provided that those behaviors are portrayed as demoralizing or dishonoring. The violence intrinsic in *taḥarrush* can only be applied to non-physical behaviors if they assume the moral weight of physical violence, where bodily or mental integrity are compromised. This further suggests that transformations in the meanings

around *taḥarrush* also impacting how *mu'ākṣa* is conceptualized. Contrary to efforts of anti-sexual harassment initiatives in promoting street sexual harassment as *taḥarrush* and then criminalizing consequent behaviors, a more focused effort on redefining *mu'ākṣa* may have significant potential impact in shifting local perceptions.

*Victim-Blaming: Challenging Femininity in Constructing Local Identity*

Concomitant with questions on *taḥarrush* and *mu'ākṣa*, survey participants were additionally asked who were the girls that were sexually harassed. In essence, the question asked participants to define the characteristic traits of such individuals, without specifying what sorts of traits to consider. Responses demonstrated a clear gender and class-based distinction in how people conceived of those women that suffered from sexual harassment in public. Men were especially apt to identify victims of sexual harassment based on their outward appearance. The large focus was on the nature of female attire and how tight women's clothes were. Younger and older men from both the lower-income neighborhood of Masaken Zilzal and the middle-income area of Shubra Mast showed very little difference in their answers to this question. Moreover, responses to this question from men in these areas were peppered with rationales for why women's clothing was particularly problematic. Men's pent-up sexual energies were often cited as reasons why women who wore form fitting shirts and jeans, and who incidentally were not respectable, were usually the targets of harassing men. Men from Heliopolis showed some variation in that, roughly, half of the respondents, both younger and older, identified all women as potential victims. The other half, however, showed more

variation in their descriptions, noting that dress, walk and outward behavior were all equally problematic and could result in women's sexual harassment in the streets.

Women, on the other hand, were far less inclined to assign blame to women's clothing. The majority of women across class and age groups asserted that any woman could suffer from sexual harassment. Interestingly, older women were slightly more apt to argue that dress could be a contributing factor to sexual harassment, as well as the age of potential victims. Some older women from Heliopolis pinpointed female dress as an indirect invitation to men, who had "*ṭaqāt 'unf*" (violent energy) that needed release. In their estimation, stretch clothes pushed the boundaries of acceptable dress for girls in public. Also, school aged girls were especially viewed as vulnerable, with some women listing age ranges from 15-18 years old. In a few cases, men's access to pornography via the Internet and sexual impropriety on television, as well as improper socialization, or "*ṭarbiyya*," of girls, were also listed as factors that lead to sexual harassment. For the most part, however, women more generally identified harassers as a problem, not women. Many respondents highlighted how a harasser would harass no matter what, regardless if a woman wore a face-veil, headscarf, or tight clothes, and that it made no difference to men for whom women were simply just an object to be used to relieve their own repressed sexual tension.

For those exploring gender-based violence and sexual harassment, regardless of location, such responses are not surprising. Fahmy et al. (2014) reported that 97% of male and 61% of overall survey respondents in their study indicated that tight clothes lead to women's sexual harassment. Perceptions in Egypt run high that the way women dress in public is somehow linked to the persistence of sexual harassment. Such reasons



that assign blame to women run counter to the growing body of statistical data where vast numbers of women have reported being the victims of sexual harassment. The data highlighted in this section are not intended simply to corroborate already existing findings. Instead, the street survey data here point toward another interesting dynamic at work that may potentially disrupt the efforts of anti-sexual harassment initiatives. In essence, women's clothing has become a trope that not only points toward the underlying imbalance of gendered power at work in Egypt but, perhaps just as importantly, larger anxieties around local identity in the neoliberal age.<sup>10</sup> The near universal focus in these street surveys on tight clothing also evident in the focus group example from Chapter 2, appear as the fetishization of dress, signaling fears around the commodification of women's bodies and the rejection of a local identity that is positioned in opposition to Western inspired values. In this way, sexual harassment not only reaffirms the heteronormative gender order, but also reaffirms a distinct sense of what it means to be Egyptian and Muslim in the face of global, Western-backed market forces.<sup>11</sup>

A number of responses to the question of victimhood noted that Egyptian women should not dress like European women and should not wear clothes that were "*khārga*" (from outside of the culture or country), including "body" fitting clothing and tight jeans

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<sup>10</sup> In 1981, El-Guindi discussed tensions around women's public participation vis-à-vis Islamic movements in the period of *infitah* (economic opening), which was marked by the flow of migrants, commodities and ideas. She notes that the *infitah* lead to corollary fears of *inhilal* (disintegration) among Islamic movement activists and that Islamic dress was a negotiation tactic for women's public participation to forestall demeaning sexual harassment – here, appropriately dressed Muslim women were portrayed as strong.

<sup>11</sup> According to Shukrallah, both women and Coptic Christians suffer from the politics of representation by the Islamic movement. The tension between modernity and national identity has lead to Coptic Christians being treated as an "other within," a discriminated class that is viewed as in cohesion with Western values. Women are an important locus of identity and Islamic tradition. She states, "The importance of this role in the reconstruction of the 'true community' has generated a fierce attack against women, in order to pull them back into line with this role" (Shukrallah, 2001: 190).

with loose blouses. This form of dress was posited in opposition to Islamic mores that required women to wear looser clothing that did not outline the form, and signified a critical tension in Egypt with circulating global fashion trends in an increasingly consumer-oriented and cosmopolitan society (Abaza 2013).<sup>12</sup> Western inspired dress and their attendant external values flooding Egypt through liberal market channels have generated apprehension around the loss of local norms and values, such that women are frequently viewed as pushing the confines of the acceptable. Here, tight clothes represent the rejection of the Islamization of the female body (Dialmy & Uhlman 2005). However, Abaza (2013) notes that “transcultural interactions” have a very long history in Egypt, where global consumer influences are visible since at least the reign of Khedive Ismail in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Islamic trends are not divorced from this process of transculturation. Abaza argues that even Islamic items of clothing, such as the “*‘abāya*,” or the flowing black robes that women wear, is a recent “invention of tradition, which was previously non-existent” (2013: 85). Yet, people frequently ignore, overlook, or do not even consider the evolution of modern Islamic dress because it adheres to some popular notion of what it means to be a Muslim woman in the current moment, while the tightness of modern, Western-style clothing is viewed as antithetical to Islamic values.

Associated with this local angst over modern female dress is the way in which sexuality, and perhaps even sexual violence, is viewed as a Western phenomenon (even commodity with respect to the availability of pornography). Abu Khalil (1997) notes that

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that Christians were no less concerned about women’s clothing than Muslims in the surveys, though there were no references to a distinct Coptic identity at threat by the way women chose to dress. In one survey response, a male respondent noted how his priest would stop Sunday services to point out young women that needed to be covered (who were then supplied with shawls) and who would be refused communion for inappropriate dress.

concerns over sexuality, including homosexuality, have a deep history in Islam. Islamic jurists and scholars of the past, in his estimation, demonstrated an obsession with sexuality, which he perceived to be more open. This was eclipsed in modern era with the rise of Islamic puritanism, which he likened to European Protestantism and resulted from a very lengthy and contentious interaction between the West and Islam (see Alatas 2007 and Sukidi 2006 on Protestantism and Islam and Vann 2011 on Puritan Islam). The nature of sexuality within this puritanized Islam shifted, "...after centuries of Christian criticisms of Islamic moral permissiveness, just as Christian criticisms of the absences of miracles in Muhammad's life produced myths and miracles that were attributed to him after his death by Muslims put on the defensive by the severity of enemy attacks" (Abu Khalil 1997: 92). Abu Khalil was concerned more with how homosexuality and its place in Islam were obscured within this growing and defensive puritanism, but also discusses how desire was repressed as shameful, while sexism and (heterosexual) male control were perpetuated. As part of this, he asserted that puritan Islam privileged heterosexual relations, and naturalized bisexual and (male) homosexual relations as a kind of prelude to heterosexual sex within marriage (Abu Khalil 1997: 101).

Abu Khalil indicates that heterosexual marriage was, in a way, just a cover making transgressive practices invisible, since homosexual relations did not end with heterosexual marriage. Marriage simply served to conceal such illicit practices, neither making it acceptable or unacceptable. This is inverted in the way people view sexual harassment. This is not to say that the act of sexual harassment is in any way similar to homosexuality, since the two may not be viewed as commensurate practices. However, public sentiments that sexual harassment serves as a means for the release of pent up

sexual energy for men who cannot marry underscores critical features of how sexuality is constructed in Egypt. Women, unlike homosexual men, are positioned as desexualized beings within this puritanized order (and, incidentally, lesbians do not receive much attention from Abu Khalil in his analysis). Ostensibly, they do not engage in any sort of sexual prelude to marriage, and have none of the same pathways for sexual exploration as straight men. Therefore, the lack of marriage as an excuse for sexual violence serves as a seeming cover that masks the male heterosexual control of women.

Within this system of male, heterosexual control, women and their bodies are fetishized through the act of concealment via Islamic codes of dress in order to preserve their honor and respectability, but also to make them viable in marriage for repressed and suffering heterosexual men that do not engage in homosexual liaisons. Berger argues that this fetishization of women's bodies through Islamic dress, such as the veil, "...is shown to be that which turns women into generic objects of consumption" (1998: 101). There is a dual practice in operation where women in public become an undifferentiated mass, who on their own assume no human status but may be commodities to be used and, as she notes, traded, but which also "...seems to stage or posit the spectral presence of the phallus" (Berger 1998: 101). In other words, women's bodies pre-suppose their use by male consumers. Yet, at the same time, Muslim women's use of jewelry and make-up serves as a means for them to display themselves "...immodestly out of modesty" and to demonstrate their value in the current sexual economy (Berger 1998: 98). The outright rejection of Islamic practices of dress may, therefore, be seen as a rejection not only of modesty codes, sexual norms and the sexual economy underwritten by Islam, but also the notion of hegemonic masculinity that desexualizes women in public. As similarly argued

in Chapter 2, sexual harassment, and perhaps any form of gendered violence, in this scenario may then be seen as an attempt to reaffirm the system of gender where male heterosexual control is absolute. Tight, Western-style clothing and women who are “over” or who prop themselves up “*ziyāda ‘an el-lezūm*” (more than necessary), as noted by survey respondents, point to the way in which sex, sexuality and even sexual violence are intertwined with global market forces and practices of commodification.

Survey respondents frequently mentioned that the victims of sexual harassment were those women who were somehow too much, i.e. their clothing, make-up and style of walking or talking was somehow deemed overly done and their femininity extreme. Not unlike the trope of dress, that of the uncontrollable female who tempts men, unleashing pent-up male sexual frustration also seems less connected to the real lives and practices of women in public and is more an expression of the anxiety people feel around their perceptions of changing norms vis-à-vis globalized practices. Within this new global order, femininity and the idea of women as both consumers and as independent beings outside of the system of male control challenge recently established Islamic identities that rest on a binary division of male and female. Within this binary, women are the ones consumed and do not consume. Sexual harassment that targets women, then, is in part a reflection of fears that local identities and life ways will give way to external, globally inspired values and represents the desire to keep both men and women in their gendered place and their place as good, authentic Muslims and Egyptians. As such, the challenge for anti-sexual harassment initiatives is not only confronting this system of gender, but also understanding the way in which that system has already been shaped by global, neoliberal market forces. In so doing, there is perhaps a need in anti-sexual harassment

activism to demonstrate that disrupting notions of masculinity and femininity does not mean the loss of any locally distinct identity.

The problem of Islamic identity in Egyptian society represents the fundamental conundrum for secular-based, civil society work. According to Mahmood, secular projects seeking to reorder public space "...has sought not so much to banish religion from the public domain but to reshape the form it takes, the subjectivities it endorses, and the epistemological claims it can make. The effectiveness of such a totalizing project necessarily depends upon transforming the religious domain through a variety of reforms and state injunctions" (2006: 326). Here, Mahmood argues that secular projects, essentially, seek to make "religious subjectivities...compliant with liberal political rule" (Mahmood 2006: 328). A return focused to Islam, not just within Islamic movements but more broadly across society, therefore, represents a rejection of liberalization, and the liberal spheres that anti-sexual harassment initiatives operate within. Initiatives, for their part, have not worked closely with religious organizations or entities, nor have they employed religiously inspired framing practices that might appeal more broadly with the public. In fact, it is the religious community in Egypt that is often viewed as reproducing the gender discrimination that contributes to sexual harassment. This was particularly evident during the Revolution when the Freedom and Justice (the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood) and the Salafi Nour Parties came forward to state that women should not be protesting in Tahrir and that those who did so and got raped knew what they were getting into (Taha 2013). At about the same time, the Salafi televangelist, Abu Islam, also decried protesting women as bad Muslims who specifically went to Tahrir to be raped, i.e. they wanted it (al-Arabiyya News 2013). There has also been a long history

of tense engagement between women's secular advocacy and Islamic organizations, where "secular" activists promoting women's rights believe that religion "...does not constitute the only source of values and axis of orientation in people's lives," and are often labeled as bad Muslims or against religion (Al-Ali 2000: 142 ). Yet, the implications of the data presented in this chapter suggest that some form of compromise solution might be critical, where religious framing devices may offer the resonance that anti-sexual harassment initiatives seek for their messaging.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the contentious and shifting nature of how sexual harassment, as a configuration of *taḥarrush ginsy*, has been understood in Egypt over the last fifteen years. Online Arabic discussion forum data demonstrated that *taḥarrush* was long understood in a multitude of ways. Prior to the beginnings of anti-sexual harassment activism in 2005, public discussions of *taḥarrush* centered largely on the molestation and rape of children, in addition to the sexual assault and rape of women at work and in their homes. However, there were additional meanings linked to sexual transgression ascribed to *taḥarrush*, including consensual, but illicit, sexual activity between unmarried partners. Discussions of *taḥarrush* also dovetailed with fears that the rape of young boys, in particular, would lead to sexual deviance and homosexuality. In 2006, a noticeable shift in discourses around *taḥarrush* occurred in Egypt, resulting from the mass sexual harassment of young women in downtown Cairo during Eid. Following this highly publicized event, discussion forum posts from Egypt largely employ *taḥarrush* to denote the public, street sexual harassment of women. This term was appropriated by the

Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) in 2005 when they began their Safe Streets campaign. The goal of this campaign was to problematize and criminalize seemingly benign yet pervasive street behaviors, such as catcalls, comments, stares, following/stalking, phone harassment, and even touching. However, the advent of the Revolution in 2011, along with the mass sexual harassment, assault and rape of women in Tahrir Square, complicated the way in which activists themselves discussed sexual harassment.

Until now, public perceptions of *taḥarrush* have not been critically analyzed and no detailed studies address the more widely understood and accepted concept of *mu'ākṣa*. Instead, a scattering of studies present *mu'ākṣa* as a courtship-type behavior that women in public, somehow, are able to manage, though it is never been made clear how this is so. This chapter presented qualitative data on public understandings of the *taḥarrush* - *mu'ākṣa* complex in order to understand in more nuanced fashion how the meanings of these two terms have been shifting. What was evident in this data was that *mu'ākṣa* and *taḥarrush* correspond respectively to verbal and physical behaviors. Verbal behaviors ranged from complementary to filthy, while physical behaviors included touching, groping, and grabbing. However, despite a slate of binary pairings around *mu'ākṣa* and *taḥarrush*, people are increasingly using *mu'ākṣa* and *taḥarrush* synonymously. Here, it is postulated that attendant meanings around *mu'ākṣa* are shifting in relation to the now widespread use of *taḥarrush*. Despite efforts of anti-sexual harassment activists to encourage people to view *taḥarrush* as encompassing problematic street behaviors, people have been reticent to view staring and comments as equivalent to rape and other physical altercations in severity. Having said that, people are willing to view staring and



comments as threatening and even dangerous, but only within the framework of new notions of *mu'āksa*. Here, the benign and flirtatious nature of *mu'āksa* is eroding away in the face of growing discourses of violence against women. *Taharrush* and *mu'āksa* are evolving into distinct but interrelated notions of the sexual harassment and assault of women.

Survey data further highlight how victim-blaming rhetoric that specifically focused on the way women dressed in public was a trope that served to reproduce the heteronormative system of gender. Prevalent in survey participant responses was a heavy focus on tight and Western-inspired forms of dress that women supposedly wear, as well as the demonization of an archetypal overly-done female that incites the lust and pent-up sexual energy of young men unable to marry in Egypt's economically depressed society. Such women were posited in opposition to Islamic visions of womanhood, which require women to dress modestly by covering their form around strange men. However, Islamic norms with respect to dress were themselves recent constructs evolving out of a long history of East-West tensions, where Islamic mores were villainized by Christian commentators. They also arose within a historic context of the global flows of commodities and values between the Western and Muslim Worlds. The focus on women's dress represented widespread local anxieties over shifting local identity vis-à-vis global, neoliberal market forces. Therefore, sexual harassment is, in part, an expression of these local tensions around globalization.

A number of issues are critical for further exploration around changing conceptions of both *taharrush* and *mu'āksa*. There is a need to better understand historic practices relating to *mu'āksa* and pre-marital courtship behaviors. Scholars have looked

more extensively at pre-marital sexual practices, such as temporary (*‘urfi*) marriage, but no detailed studies have directly engaged courtship rituals in the public space. For this reason, it is unclear how women have actually perceived their street interactions with men, as well as what sorts of practices constitute *mu ‘āksa*. This is also important to better understand shifting notions of both *mu ‘āksa* and *taḥarrush*. Additionally, a need exists to understand how shifting norms around *taḥarrush*, i.e., their new meanings focused largely on women in the public space, impact how sexual violence directed at children is now understood. Whereas *taḥarrush* offered the conceptual framework in the past for discussing crimes against children, what has been left in the wake of shifting norms and discursive practices with respect to children is unclear. This is vital in Egypt, where there is little infrastructure and legal support for families dealing with these sorts of crises. Lastly, public resistance to new norms and frames of sexual harassment are linked to tensions between modernity, represented by Western, neoliberal market practices, and a locally authentic, Islamic identity. Perhaps in order to be more successful, anti-sexual harassment initiatives must consider the frames they promote may directly challenge norms linked to Islamic notions of womanhood and to find other, more creative methods to continue their work in ways that do not threaten local identities that incorporate Islamic mores.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL CHANGE AROUND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In Spring 2013, HarassMap was invited to co-coordinate and participate in the first of what would become a regular effort organized by Zumba Fitness and Wen-Do self defense, two fitness programs offered through locally based gyms/ dance studios. Named *IGMADI ded el-taharrush*, or Be Strong Against Sexual Harassment, this was a paid public event open only to women, and it was widely advertised via numerous online and offline channels and networks, including that of participating gyms, NGOs, and social initiatives. Since its' beginning, IGMADI has also gained widespread media attention. It promotes the physical and emotional health and wellbeing, alongside offering women positive advice and training to teach them how to defend themselves against sexual harassment, both physical and verbal, in the street. The two-hour event, held in various locations, such as the Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel in downtown Cairo, included high-energy dance/zumba and self-defense sessions, but the event also organized performances and games by anti-sexual harassment entities such as HarassMap. In 2013, there were three such IGMADI events, with more than 1000 female participants (HarassMap 2015). In spring 2014, the female rapper and participant on the regionally broadcast hit television show, Arabs Got Talent, Maryam Mahmoud, joined IGMADI to perform a song she wrote on sexual harassment. Throughout 2014 and 2015, IGMADI became a regular outreach event traveling across Egypt, taking place even in schools, to reach broad swaths of women to promote empowerment through building health and self-confidence.

IGMADI is just one of what is a proliferating number of public events that engages everyday individuals on the issues of sexual harassment, gender violence and women's right to public space. In 2012, UN Women participated with local activists in the *Nefsy* (I Wish) campaign, in which women formed human chains along busy streets, holding signs with varying messages that highlighted the impact of sexual harassment on women in public space. In late 2013, as part of the *ṣallahha fī dimāghak* campaign, participating initiatives teamed up with Mashrou' a Mareekh, an open microphone initiative, to give all individuals a free and open forum to speak of their experiences or thoughts about sexual harassment. Open mic events have become a popular form of public engagement for anti-sexual harassment initiatives in various venues, including on university campuses. Also, in early 2014, a number of NGOs and initiatives, including Nazra for Feminist Studies and HarassMap, took part in a major public event in the *Borsa* area of downtown Cairo, well known for its rampant sexual harassment. The event, put on by the Women on Walls (WoW) artist initiative, focused on women's empowerment. It included a week of painting graffiti on walls, workshops, dance and public talks geared toward raising public awareness on gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. In addition to this, long-standing and regular performances by theater groups, like the BuSSy (Look) Project, and even art exhibits through galleries, such as Darb 1718, conducted in conjunction with a variety of outreach efforts of anti-sexual harassment groups, like the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) and HarassMap, further underscore the negative ramifications of sexual harassment on women's bodies and experiences in public.

These examples provide brief glimpses of the diversity of events and forms of public engagement through which anti-sexual harassment initiatives, and even concerned members of the public, are attempting to raise public awareness of sexual harassment. Art, music, performance, and public speaking that include everyday individuals have become regularized tactics in appealing to public understanding and sensibilities. Moreover, such tactics were employed and foreshadowed by ECWR that actively organized awareness days at El-Sawy Culture Wheel (a Zamalek-based cultural center), which attracted 1000 participants, The Gezira Youth Center, and the Goethe Institute (Rizzo 2008).

This year marks ten years of anti-sexual harassment activism, begun in 2005 by ECWR but now including an increasing range of formal and informal groups, like HarassMap, seeking ways to change social perceptions, social behaviors, and inequitable laws. While this dissertation has made no causal claims that anti-sexual harassment activism is, in fact, shaping public perceptions, in large part because not all of the critical channels through which information travels were examined (namely mass media, whether television or print), ten years later it is clear that the messaging and the rhetoric of these anti-sexual harassment initiatives is an important feature of the growing discourse on sexual harassment in Egypt. The larger goals of this dissertation were to show 1) what community-based efforts were doing about sexual harassment and the discursive and mobilizational approaches they employed, with particular emphasis on HarassMap's bystander approach; 2) how such initiatives operated in a middle space and were mediating a range of local and extra-local forces in the construction of new discourses of sexual harassment, which built on yet also challenged long-held social norms on gender;

3) how the cultural negotiations of community-based anti-sexual harassment initiatives represented a political process with long-term political impacts, and is viewed by community-based initiatives as a critical facet of facilitating sustainable social change; and 4) how local perceptions do not yet fully align with the new norms (and the discursive frames around these norms) promoted by the community-based anti-sexual harassment initiatives.

Perhaps an even bigger question to ask at this point is why it is important to understand what community-based initiatives are doing to reshape social perspectives and behavior. Correspondingly, why have community-based efforts proliferated in post-Revolution Egypt and why does it matter if this is or is not a political process? One of the most salient reasons for both of these questions is the recognition that people themselves have the power to shape the societies in which they live. Of course, this focus on the power of people is mirrored in international development and transnational human/women's advocacy, focused increasingly on citizen action and the funding of grassroots efforts at change (Cornwall & Brock 2006). In many ways, the everyday actions of individuals are even more significant in shaping the course of sociopolitical change than political advocacy and even revolution. Bayat raised this idea when proposing his theory on the quiet encroachment of the ordinary with respect to poor people's movements in Iran, stating "...my aim is to show how these ordinary and quiet practices by very ordinary and often silent people engender significant social changes – the kinds of changes that are comparable to those that revolutions are said to achieve for them" (1997: 5). The beliefs and behaviors of all members of society serve as the fundamental foundation of social and political practice. Accordingly, efforts to change

those beliefs and behaviors – Starchursky’s (2013) “deep politics” of change - represent an almost revolutionary attempt to rearrange the foundation of social and political life itself. In this way, understanding the community-based strategies of initiatives (and NGOs and movements) bears at least equal weight - and significance - with the study of political mobilization and revolution.

Toward that end, this dissertation underscores the various strategic approaches undertaken by one social initiative that figures large in community-based efforts in Egypt, HarassMap. Founded in 2010, just months prior to the Revolution, HarassMap was in many ways the continuation of efforts by its predecessor, ECWR. ECWR was the first to tackle the problem of sexual harassment within the community in order to convince people that sexual harassment was a real problem with real effects on women. While some scholars have found aspects of ECWR’s work and messaging problematic, ECWR set a precedent for the need to change how the public understood sexual harassment, particularly in the repressive Egyptian political climate that makes political work challenging. Such an approach was a risk management tactic, but it also emerged in response to what some ECWR members, especially those working on the anti-sexual harassment campaign, saw as a gap in social and political activism in Egypt. HarassMap, when it arose, also sought to work in communities and on the streets, without directly engaging the state through political advocacy. For HarassMap’s co-founders, it was in the streets where Egypt would (and will) see real effective change on the problem of sexual harassment, not through limited and nominal legal reformulations weakly implemented by a government that is uncommitted to reform and gender equality.

HarassMap's community-based strategies include constructing new discourses and forms of public outreach. On the discursive side of their work, HarassMap is loosely informed by feminist-inspired perspectives that posit sexual harassment to be the control of female bodies by privileged men in a patriarchal society and that this control, in fact, represents the reproduction of a binary system of gender where heterosexuality is the norm. By "loose," I imply here that HarassMap staff do not directly pull from feminist theory when devising messages and trainings but are part of a transnational network of gender activism that is already informed by the long history of work by feminist activists. Chapter 4 highlighted the contours of this discourse, identifying seven primary themes prevalent in their messaging campaigns, as well as three framing strategies for effecting change. In addition to discourse, HarassMap's work is also underpinned by social-psychological theory about the bystander effect and theories of critical mass. For them, bystanding represents the fundamental reason why sexual harassment exists, regardless of prevailing discriminatory gender norms – people generally do not speak up to help when they see someone is trouble. For that reason, as discussed in Chapter 5, outreach campaigns in the streets, inside of schools and with local public entities/businesses are undertaken to convince people to start speaking up. At the same time, these campaigns work to change people's perspectives on gendered norms, and promote the development of internal escalation policies that provide due process for those suffering sexual harassment within participating entities.

However, the analysis of public perceptions discussed in Chapter 6, demonstrated interesting trends and thoughts for future activism. Social media data analysis explored the history of the use of the term sexual harassment, as *taharrush ginsy*, over a 12-year



period. This analysis noted early associations of *taharrush* with molestation and rape, particularly of children but also of women in the private sphere. In Egypt, a shift occurred in this discourse with the Eid mob sexual harassment event in 2006 in downtown Cairo, after which *taharrush* became associated with the public sexual harassment of women in the streets. This discursive shift coincided with efforts of anti-sexual harassment initiatives to frame sexual harassment as a crime, which *taharrush* as a violent action made possible. Street surveys with young and older male and female residents in three Cairene neighborhoods at varying socioeconomic levels further highlighted that people have a widespread conception of sexual harassment. However, people's perceptions draw distinct boundaries between physical and verbal forms of harassment and do not fully align with the discourses of anti-sexual harassment activism. Verbal harassment is still primarily associated with older notions of flirtation, or *mu'aksa*. This analysis, however, further underscored the wide variability in the use of *mu'aksa*, versus *taharrush*, where *mu'aksa* is becoming more and more associated with violence, even if still largely verbal. Here, verbal actions take on the seriousness of physical altercations. In addition, the survey data also made visible the public pre-occupation with the way women dress in public, where sexual harassment is perceived to largely be the result of women wearing tight clothes. Such public concerns signal deep anxiety around local identity in the global, consumer-driven marketplace. Sexual harassment here is linked to this anxiety, allowing for the re-affirmation of gendered roles and local (Muslim) identity centered on these gendered roles.

Given the findings in this dissertation, some gaps in anti-sexual harassment work that may hinder efforts toward social change include:

Conceptual Issues: The data highlights that *mu'āksa* is still a prevalent and longstanding concept that is not being addressed by anti-sexual harassment initiatives. In general, the approach has been to deny that everyday sexually harassing acts can be called *mu'āksa*, when they should more correctly understood as *taḥarrush*. Examples of this can be found in various messaging campaigns that note certain behaviors, like comments, catcalls and stares, are not *mu'āksa* and are, in fact, *taḥarrush*. This approach has not resonated well with the public that continues to see a distinction between verbal and physical transgressions. This is not to say that people do not view these kinds of behaviors problematically, but they are less inclined to treat the verbal exchanges as seriously because of the historic meanings associated with *taḥarrush*. In other words, verbal harassment does not yet hold the same gravity as assault or even rape, and therefore people refuse to conflate the two under the name *taḥarrush*. In order to facilitate the change they want, an important component of discursive change for anti-sexual harassment initiatives is to reframe *mu'āksa* in ways that better align it with *taḥarrush*, such that the two truly become synonymous in meaning. For instance, campaigns that underscores the violent nature of *mu'āksa* and which highlight it as a form of *taḥarrush* might be an option to consider.

Identity Issues: In 2013 and early 2014, HarassMap's Marketing and Communications unit took on a market research project in the hopes of developing a new campaign designed to associate speaking up against sexual harassment with "coolness." This campaign sought to tap into locally held values and to associate standing up with those

values. Unfortunately, the Director of Marketing and Communication in charge of the project left HarassMap in spring 2014 and the campaign did not materialize. HarassMap still maintains interest in the campaign, as does the former Director, who retained her affiliation with HarassMap as a campaign consultant (of sorts). Harassmap and other initiatives, however, have not yet designed messages that associate standing up to sexual harassment, or creating public spaces free of sexual harassment, with notions tied to Egyptian or Islamic culture, practice or history. In other words, there is no example of practice linked to some sense of self that is also distinct from some sense of the other. In particular, victim-blaming rationales that focus on women's clothes must be differentially addressed so that people begin to see that women regardless of how they dress are worthy Egyptians (or Muslims). It is important for anti-sexual harassment groups to work within a framework that acknowledges Islamic norms guiding social beliefs and practice. Alongside campaigns that demand people recognize that sexual harassment happens to all women, in various forms of dress, noting that each of these women is also a human being in some other Egyptian or Islamic value system is critical.

Circulation Issues: The same campaign noted above as in the planning stages in early 2014 was intended to be a "Through the Line" campaign. In marketing terms, the goal was to make use of both above and below the line media outlets for circulating campaign messages. The goal was to not only continue to use Internet-based platforms and tools, but to work to expand into mass media promotion and to design public service-type announcements. Media has long been an area that HarassMap believes to be crucial. From television portrayals of sexual harassment and gender violence to news coverage in

print and broadcast, they have been interested in understanding more about how media operates in order to combat persistent discriminatory stereotypes that have wide public reach through these channels.

Toward that end, HarassMap's Marketing and Communications unit has long engaged with journalists in promoting their work (though stories are developed by the journalists and news agencies, who have their own reporting agendas). In 2013, the unit developed a project designed to explore international and national news coverage of sexual harassment in Egypt. However, the project remains unfunded and of peripheral import to the unit. Moreover, it does not more adequately explore media overall and there has not been any current push to move into the kinds of televisionary approaches that Howe (2008) noted existed in Nicaraguan gender activism. Howe explored how Nicaragua gender activists produced their own soap operas and utilized the reach of television to spread new norms of gender. A soap opera is not the only option to explore for HarassMap, but finding new partnerships that allow them to expand into television, with its almost 100% reach in the country, would help to spread their messages more expansively.

In the coming years, it is unclear how community-based anti-sexual harassment activism will unfold. What makes the future even more uncertain are the post-Revolutionary shifts that are (re)solidifying authoritarian military rule. Beginning in 2013, almost as soon as Morsi was deposed, the newly reinstalled military regime, with (the newly retired military general) El-Sisi elected as President in 2014, undertook stringent measures to suppress civil (and religious) activism. News stories of the arrest

and imprisonment of numerous activists, rumors among activists of targeted NGO raids, and even plans to monitor, and perhaps censor, Internet activity have set a new tone for human and women's rights work overall in the country (CSMonitor 2014; Al-Monitor 2014). Toward the end of participant observation for this project, stories circulated within HarassMap that even the personal social media activity of a single individual member could jeopardize the entire organization and that Egypt was seeing the worst repression of civil society that it had seen for a long time - worse than under Mubarak. This increasingly scary reality led HarassMap leadership to ask its members to approach their personal online activity with caution. Moreover, news that the government was revising and updating NGO Law 84 of 2002 created an uproar within civil society, as many of the entities that previously skirted the repressive law by registering as corporations were forced to change their registration or risk being shut down (Reuters 2014). As the government consolidates its power base, there is great risk to all initiatives that seek to undermine the political status quo, including those engaged in street activism. Yet, perhaps the perceived fissure between culture and politics, and the belief that cultural negotiations pose no real threat to the legitimacy of ruling elites, will allow such initiatives to slide by with minimal attention.

Regardless, as of the completion of this dissertation, community work continues for anti-sexual harassment groups like HarassMap. Most recently, with the government seeking greater control over public space through crackdowns on civil society organizations, HarassMap's community-based activities are increasingly moving out of the streets and into institutions. In part, this is due to a newly enforced requirement that all groups conducting community work must seek the appropriate permits from local

police stations. Such permits are haphazardly given by the police, and usually contribute to difficulties with organizing community groups. This situation has resulted in HarassMap placing a greater emphasis on the Safe Areas, Safe Schools and Universities and Safe Corporates programs, though they are re-evaluating their community-based and technological strategies.

In terms of community outreach, HarassMap staff are keen to approach work in the streets in ways that make it possible to measure effect, that don't stretch the unit too thin and that also adequately account for the concerns of different groups of individuals. For instance, in a personal conversation with HarassMap Executive Director Reem Wael (2016), she indicated there is some indication a bystander approach is not effective for all populations, such as refugees who are themselves already disempowered. For this reason, there are now discussions about amending their messaging to tailor it toward specific groups. With respect to technology, there is also growing concern among HarassMap staff that crowd-mapping technology is not very effective because there is usually no benefit to those who report. The information submitted to the map lives online with no follow-up, meaning HarassMap does not have the capability to investigate each claim or to provide legal or psychological services. Research unit staff members are now working on better understanding community needs with sexual harassment reporting and to, in turn, devise new strategies to support those needs.

My own engagement with HarassMap continues, as well. Most recently, I have been asked to serve as a research consultant on a new global replication project. Since its inception, HarassMap has served as a coach to numerous groups in other countries who have been interested in replicating HarassMap's technological model of mapping sexual

harassment. According to Rebecca Chiao (personal conversation 2016), she has coached almost 50 different groups on how HarassMap implemented its model. Such coaching included providing detailed information via emails, meeting via skype sessions, and holding physical workshops and in-person meetings to walk these groups through the process of implementation. Such groups were located across the Middle East, Africa, India, Asia, Europe, North and Latin America – not all of whom followed through with implementation. With funding from the Canadian-based International Development Research Center (IDRC), HarassMap will now follow up with many of these groups to learn more about their coaching experience, their current needs, specific contextual issues they face with respect to sexual harassment in their locales, and how to get everyone to work together through the use of a global dashboard modeled on Ushahidi. This is a project I will assist with, including surveying and interviewing members of these groups and assisting in developing a cooperative process, implementation and follow-up.

I have sought a more engaged approach to ethnographic work. Low and Merry (2010) note five forms of engagement for anthropologists. These are “sharing and support,” which they highlight as a shared commitment to social justice with interlocutors, “teaching and public education,” focusing more on teaching and training using an anthropological perspective, “social critique,” focusing on structural power imbalances, “collaboration,” in which participant anthropologists move into more active collaborative work with interlocutors without necessarily assuming leadership roles, and “advocacy,” in which anthropologists provide various levels of assistance to groups when those groups require it, with an emphasis on assisting in organizing or political advocacy. My own work crosses a number of these forms of engagement, where I have shared my

writing with HarassMap staff members and have brought those interested into the theorizing and writing process. Moreover, I have been called on to represent HarassMap at various events when staff members are not available, continue to collaborate on various projects when research is needed, and also serve as a Board member who is readily available to troubleshoot problems for HarassMap as they arise. For instance, in November 2015, HarassMap suspended operations while their NGO application was pending. This suspension was decided on by HarassMap leadership in collaboration with Board members and was a response to the increasingly precarious situation for NGOs and civil society organizations in Egypt. As a member of the Board, my own support for this decision was predicated on concern for the safety of HarassMap's community activists who ran the risk of arrest with continued operations without formal registration in place.

The future is both hopeful and bleak, as community-based work offers the chance for deep and lasting change, while the political situation may prove hindering to all forms of activism.



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## APPENDIX A

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD HUMAN SUBJECTS EXEMPTION

**To:** James Eder  
ANTH

**From:** *for* Mark Roosa, Chair *cm*  
Soc Beh IRB

**Date:** 05/22/2013

**Committee Action:** Exemption Granted

**IRB Action Date:** 05/22/2013

**IRB Protocol #:** 1305009232

**Study Title:** The Role of NGOs in Mediating Global Discourses of Sexual Violence in Cairo, Egypt

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

### **Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study**

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Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study/Survey Cover Letter

**Project Title:** The Role of NGOs in Mediating Global Discourses of Sexual Violence in Cairo, Egypt  
**Principle Investigator:** Angie Abdelmonem, PhD Candidate, Arizona State University; Research Fellow, Institute for Gender and Women's Studies, the American University in Cairo  
James Eder, PhD, Arizona State University  
**Email:** [angie.abdelmonem@asu.edu](mailto:angie.abdelmonem@asu.edu)  
[james.eder@asu.edu](mailto:james.eder@asu.edu)

**Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is to investigate how NGOs are spreading awareness and have changed public opinion about sexual harassment in Egypt. The findings from this study may be published in academic journals or newsletters and presented at conferences. Results will also be provided to the NGOs that are the subject of this study. The expected duration of your participation in this study is anywhere from 15-20 minutes to 1-2 hours.

Research procedures include participant observation within NGOs and interviews with NGO staff members, volunteers, program participants, as well as community members not affiliated with an NGO. Through participant observation, I will be present at all relevant trainings, information sessions, meetings, and conferences where I will observe the interactions between NGO staff members with other staff members, other civil society members, members of the community, and participants in NGO programs. Through the interview process, I will ask detailed questions about sexual harassment programming, personal perceptions about sexual harassment as a problem in Egypt, personal perceptions about women in public, and the impact of sexual harassment on women, among other questions.

There may be certain risks of discomfort associated with this research. The topic of sexual harassment is sensitive and there may be questions that cause anger or embarrassment. There are no foreseeable risks to personal safety by participating in this research.

There will likely be no direct benefit to you by participating in this study. However, your participation may contribute to a better understanding of the effectiveness of NGO programming and may help to guide improvements in approaches to spreading awareness.

The information you provide for the purposes of this research is anonymous and confidential. No individual will be identified in any report or publication resulting from this study. All NGO staff members, volunteers and participants will receive pseudonyms. All

survey interviews with community members will be anonymous. I would like to tape record interviews, but this will occur only with your permission. If an interview is tape-recorded, you are free to withdraw permission for the recording any time throughout the interview. All recordings will be stored in a password protected digital folder on the researcher's computer.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة



## استمارة موافقة مسابقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان البحث: دور المنظمات غير الحكومية في التوسط لخطابات العالمة من العنف الجنسي.

الباحث الرئيسي: انجي عبد المنعم، طالبة الدكتوراه في الجامعة الاريزونا و زميل أبحاث في الجامعة الامريكية بالقاهرة؛  
جايمس ايدر، دكتور علم الانسان في الجامعة الاريزونا.

البريد الالكتروني:

[angie.abdelmonem@asu.edu](mailto:angie.abdelmonem@asu.edu)

[james.eder@asu.edu](mailto:james.eder@asu.edu)

الهاتف:

انت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسته بحثيه عن:

هدف الدراسة هو: اكتشاف كيف تعمل المنظمات الغير حكوميه علي نشر الوعي .و كيف تغير رأي الناس في قضيه التحرش الجنسي في مصر.

نتائج هذا البحث سوف تنشر في الجهات الإعلاميه و سوف تناقش في المؤتمرات.

المده المتوقعه للمشاركة في هذا البحث هي ٢٠ ١٥ دقيقه او ١٢ ساعات.

مع الافراد التي اجرات البحث تشمل: الملاحظه بالمشاركه من خلال المنظمات الغير حكوميه .و عمل المقابلات مع الافراد العاملين بها و المتطوعين، وايضا لا تربطهم علاقه مع المنظمات.

و سوف أحضر كل التدريبات و الندوات العلميه و الاجتماعات و اي مؤتمرات تخص قضيه التحرش الجنسي.

ومن خلال المقابلات سوف أسأل فيما يخص برامج التحرش الجنسي و عن الآراء الشخصيه في هذا الموضوع في مصر.

و ايضاً عن وجود المراه في المجتمع الخارجي و تأثيره عليها.

و لكن ليس أي خطر من بعض الاسئله محتمل ان تكون مزعجه للبعض، إن موضوع التحرش الجنسي حساس و سوف يسبب الغضب أو الكسوف للبعض العمل علي هذا البحث.

ليس هناك أي إستفاده من إشتراكك في هذا البحث ولكن بالتعاون سوف نحصل علي إستيعاب دور المنظمه و سوف يتم نشر الوعي بطريقه افضل.

أي معلومات تدلي بها ستكون سريه للغاية ولن يعلن عن اسم أي شخصيه سوف تشارك في هذا البحث.

كل أعضاء المنظمه و المتطوعين سوف يحصلون علي أسماء حركيه. و سوف تسجل كل المقابلات ولكن بعد موافقه المتطوعين.

من حقك أن تنسحب من المقابله في أي وقت.

كل التسجيلات سوف تحفظ علي الكمبيوتر مع وضع كلمه سريه علي الملف.

المشاركه في هذا البحث تطوع وليست مفروضه علي أحد.

رفضك للمشاركة لن يعرضك لأي مسأله أو خساره أو غرامه . ومن حقك أن تنسحب في أي وقت خلال المقابله.

.....: الامضاء:

.....: اسم المشارك :

...../...../.....: التاريخ :

## **Survey Recruitment Script**

My name is Angie Abdelmonem and I am a doctoral student and researcher with the Institute for Gender and Women's Studies at the American University in Cairo. I am conducting a research study on non-governmental organizations and how they spread awareness about sexual harassment in Egypt. As part of this study, it is important to know people's opinions about the problem of sexual harassment.

I am recruiting people to participate in a survey with twenty questions that should take no longer than 30 minutes.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you participate, your name will not be recorded and will be completely anonymous. You are free to answer only the questions you wish to. Your responses to these questions will also be used by HarassMap to better assist you with trainings and outreach activities in your governorate.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, you can reach me at [angie.abdelmonem@asu.edu](mailto:angie.abdelmonem@asu.edu).

أنا بحضر الدكتوراة في علم الانسان و باحثة في معهد الدراسات لسأون المرأة في الجامعة الامريكية بالقاهرة.

انا بعمل بحث عن المنظمات غير الحوكمية و ازي هي بتتنشر الوعي عن التحرش الجنسي في مصر. في بحثي، عايزة اخذ رأي الناس عن مشكلة التحرش الجنسي.

انا بسأل الناس تشارك في حديث قصير مكون عن ٢٠ سؤال. مش حياخد وقت اكتر من ١٠ ٢٠ دقائق.

مشاركتك في بحثي تطوع، مش اجباري. لو تشارك فيه، مش هسجل اسمك. لللك الحق انك ترد على اسأيلة اللي عياز ترد عليها.

لو عندك اي سؤل عن بحثي، ممكن تتصل\تتصلي بيا في اي وقت علي [edu.asu@abdelmonem.angie](mailto:edu.asu@abdelmonem.angie)



APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

## النظرة الاجتماعية للتحرش الجنسي في مصر

1. ما هو التحرش الجنسي؟ ما هي الافعال اللي بتعتبرها تحرش جنسي؟
2. ما هو الفرق بين التحرش الجنسي والمعاكسة، و امتى الناس هتستخدم كلمة تحرش او كلمة معاكسة؟
3. لو حصل لفئة تحرش جنسي في الشارع، الناش هتعمل اية و هتقول اية عنها، و ليه؟
4. في رأيك، امتى هتقول الناس ان البنات نازلته تتعاكس او مبسوطه بالتحرش، و ليه؟
5. في رأيك، ما هي العوامل المعينة في مصر التي تساهم في التحرش الجنسي؟
6. في رأيك، ما هي صفات الناس اللي بتتعرض للتحرش الجنسي، و ليه هي بتتعرض للتحرش؟
7. في رأيك، ما هي صفات المتحرشين و ليه هم بيتحرشوا؟
8. في رأيك، ما هو انسب رد فعل من الناس اللي اتعرضوا للتحرش الجنسي؟
9. ماذا سمعت\سمعتي من الشيوخ في المساجد او على التلفزيون (او من الازهر) عن التحرش الجنسي؟
10. ما هي الاماكن اللي بتسمع\بتسمعي فيها كلام على التحرش الجنسي اكثر، و سمعت\سمعتي اية عنه؟
11. العمر:
12. الحالة الاجتماعية:
13. عندك اطفال؟ كام طفل؟ اولاد ولا بنات و أعمارهم:
14. العمل:
15. طالب\طالبة، اذكر مدرستك او جامعتك:

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### **Semi-structured Interview Questions**

1. Why did you start working at [INSERT NGO NAME] or participating in its programs? How did you learn about the [INSERT NGO NAME]?
2. How long have you worked at the [INSERT NGO NAME] or when did you begin participating in its programs?
3. What did you think about el-taharush el-ginsy or mu3aksa before you joined the [INSERT NGO NAME]?
4. How would you define el-taharush el-ginsy?
5. What is your opinion of the problem of el-taharush el-ginsy in Cairo? Do you believe that violence is a reality for women on the streets of Cairo? If so, what are the causes of el-taharush el-ginsy in Egypt?
6. How has your involvement in sexual harassment programs changed your ideas about violence against women?
7. Has your involvement in sexual harassment programs changed your relationships with family and friends? If so, how?
8. Do you face any opposition from family members in participating in sexual harassment programs or going into public? If so, why?
9. Why was el-taharush el-ginsy chosen rather than mu3aksa in the [INSERT NGO NAME] program?
10. When did el-taharush el-ginsy first come into use in the [INSERT NGO NAME] program or when did you first hear of the term el-taharush el-ginsy?
11. How else has the term el-taharush el-ginsy been used in the past?
12. What was the initial public response to the use of el-taharush el-ginsy?
13. Do you believe the [INSERT NGO NAME] program on el-taharush el-ginsy is successful, why or why not?
14. How does [INSERT NGO NAME] find venues to run information and training sessions?
15. Do you run into resistance from location managers when arranging such events?
16. How have opinions changed in Egypt toward el-taharush el-ginsy? What reasons do you think are contributing to changing opinions?
17. How has media attention affected people's understanding of el-taharush el-ginsy?
18. How are the attacks in Tahrir Square changing el-taharush el-ginsy in the streets, if at all?
19. What has the police response been toward el-taharush el-ginsy, before and after the revolution?
20. What strategies to combat el-taharush el-ginsy do you think work well?
21. What strategies don't work well?
22. What new or better approaches would you like to take?
23. What community connections does your NGO have?
24. How has your NGO included the community in its programs?
25. Does your NGO have any connection to the activists that have started taking action against sexual harassment using social media?

26. If so, what is the nature of your NGO's relationship with these activists?
27. What connections in the religious establishment does your NGO have?
28. What has the response been from the religious community on el-taharush el-ginsy, before and after the revolution, and
29. What impact do you think the religious establishment has on public opinion?
30. What has the state response been to sexual harassment programs at your NGO and other NGOs, before and after the revolution?
31. What international connections does your NGO have?
32. Has your NGO been involved in global programs to combat violence against women?
33. Do you think that international standards on women's rights have a place in Egypt?
34. Should women's rights be the same everywhere?
35. If women's rights are not the same everywhere, how are they different in Egypt?
36. What solutions do you think are needed to bring an end to el-taharush el-ginsy in Egypt?

١. لية بدأت تشتغل/تشتغلي في [اسم المنظمة] او تشارك/تشاركي في البرنامج؟ إزي عرفت المنظمة دي؟
٢. بقالك اد ايه تشتغل/تشتغلي في [اسم المنظمة] او تشارك/تشاركي في برنامج عن التحرش الجنسي؟
٣. اية هو التحرش الجنسي / ازاى تعرفي التحرش الجنسي ؟
٤. هل سمعت/سمعتي اى حاجة عن التحرش الجنسي قبل ما تشتغل/تشتغلي في [اسم المنظمة] او قبل ما تشارك/تشاركي في البرنامج؟
٥. في رأيك التحرش الجنسي هل هو مشكلة في مصر؟ هل هناك عنف ضد المرأة في شوارع القاهرة؟ هل تفتكر تفتكري ان في عنف ضد المرأة في شوارع؟ لو في عنف، اية هو السبب ؟
٦. من ساعة ما اتشتغلت/اتشتغلتي في برنامج التحرش الجنسي، غيرت افكارك عن العنف ضد المرأة؟
٧. من ساعة ما اتشتغلت/اشتغلتي في برنامج التحرش الجنسي، هل تغيرت علاقاتك بينك و بين اسرتك او اصحابك؟
٨. في حد في اسرتك مش عايزك تشتغل/تشتغلي او تشارك/تشاركي في برنامج التحرش الجنسي ؟ لو حصل ده في رأيك لية؟
٩. لية اختاروا اسم التحرش الجنسي في البرنامج و مش معاكسة؟
١٠. امتي اول مرة استعمل اسم التحرش الجنسي في المنظمة (اسم المنظمة)؟
١١. هل تم استعمال اسم "التحرش الجنسي" من قبل؟ ازاى تم استعماله؟
١٢. اية رد فعل الناس علي التحرش الجنسي؟

١٣. في رأيك هل برنامج التحرش الجنسي [اسم المنظمة] ناجح؟
١٤. إزاي بتلاقي الاماكن اللي بتعمل التدريب و ندوات المعلومات عن التحرش الجنسي ؟
١٥. لما بتنظم ندوات عن التحرش الجنسي هل في اي مشاكل من مديرين الاماكن؟
١٦. هل الافكار إتغيرت عند المصريين عن التحرش الجنسي؟ اية اسباب تغير افكارهم؟
١٧. إزي وسائل الاعلام بتأثر على معرفة الناس بالتحرش الجنسي؟
١٨. هل الانتهكات في التحرير بتأثر التحرش الجنسي في الشوارع الأخرى؟
١٩. ايه رد فعل البوليس علي التحرش الجنسي قبل وبعد الثورة؟
٢٠. في رأيك أي طريقة افضل توقف التحرش الجنسي؟
٢١. في رأيك أي طريقة مش مفيدة؟
٢٢. هل تفضل/تفضل طريقة معينة أو جديدة في التعامل مع التحرش؟
٢٣. هل [اسم المنظمة] لها علاقات اجتماعية ؟
٢٤. ازي بتجذب الناس يشتركوا معاك في [اسم المنظمة] ؟
٢٥. ازي [اسم المنظمة] بتشتغل مع النشاط في محاربة التحرش الجنسي علي الانترنت ؟
٢٦. ايه طبيعة العلاقة بين منظمكم والنشطاء ؟
٢٧. ايه طبيعة العلاقات بين [اسم المنظمة] والمؤسسات الدينية؟
٢٨. ايه هو رد فعل المؤسسات الدينية علي التحرش الجنسي قبل وبعد الثورة؟
٢٩. ازي المؤسسات الدينية بتأثر في اراء الناس عن التحرش الجنسي؟
٣٠. ايه رد فعل الحكومة علي برنامج التحرش الجنسي في منظمكم وأي منظمة ثانية قبل وبعد الثورة؟
٣١. ايه العلاقات بينكم وبين المنظمات التنموية الدولية؟
٣٢. هل منظمكم بتشارك في أي برنامج دولي عن العنف ضد الناس ؟
٣٣. هل تفتكر/تفتكري ان المعايير الدولية لحقوق المرأة لها مكان في مصر؟
٣٤. هل حقوق المرأة من المفروض تكون في كل الدول زي بعضها ؟
٣٥. لو المعايير بين البلاد بخصوص حقوق المرأة مختلفة، ازاي في رأيك تكون مختلفة في مصر ؟
٣٦. ايه الحل في رأيك للقضاي علي التحرش الجنسي في شوارع مصر؟

APPENDIX D

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS CODEBOOK

<b>Number:</b>	1
<b>Code Name:</b>	Child Molestation
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, physical or sexual interaction with children/individuals under 18; often generically described; separate from child rape; Often described with references to negative impacts
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Exploitation; Violating kids bodies; Sexually Assaulted; Sexual Harassment of Boys; Children Left Home Alone; Touching Genitals; Child Sexual Abuse
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	2
<b>Code Name:</b>	Child Rape
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with children/individuals under 18 that involves forced penetration; Often a specific mention of rape within the context of the abuse of children; Does not include discussions of molestation without specific mention of rape
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Child Rape; Rape (in the context of discussion on child molestation); Sexual Intercourse
<b>Close But No:</b>	

If one of the above codes is utilized, one of the below codes must also be selected, except in cases where the harasser is not specified:

<b>Number:</b>	1/2a
<b>Code Name:</b>	Incest
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with children/individuals under 18 by members of the child's/individual's immediate or extended family/relatives
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Father, Brother, Uncle, Family, Cousin, Relative, Stepfather, Grandfather
<b>Close But No:</b>	



<b>Number:</b>	1/2b
<b>Code Name:</b>	Servants/Domestic Help
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with children/individuals under 18 by domestic help
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Servants, Nannies, Maids, Drivers
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	1/2c
<b>Code Name:</b>	Schools and Other Public Venues
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with children/individuals under 18 by professionals in education, medicine,
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Teachers, Doctors, Female Teachers
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	1/2d
<b>Code Name:</b>	Neighbors
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with children/individuals under 18 by individuals living in the same building, street, or area
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Neighbor
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	1/2e
<b>Code Name:</b>	Religious Leaders
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with children/individuals under 18 by members of the religious establishment – clergy, such as priests, imams and rabbis.
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Neighbor
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	3
<b>Code Name:</b>	Sexual Harassment of Women
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, Sexual interaction with females over 18 that does not involve sexual intercourse or rape; Not courting, flirtation or muaksa; May co-occur with flirtation or muaksa; May include assault; Not mob assault or group harassment; May include verbal interactions that are not benign in nature; Verbal harassment is only harassment in the context of other aspects of harassment described; May be generically utilized
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Harassment; Groping; Rubbing; Touching; Physical Violence; Moral Violation; Sexual Violence; Vulgar Talk; Vulgar Jokes; Oral (Words); Virginity Testing
<b>Close But No:</b>	Flirtation, Courting, Teasing, Muakasat;

If the above code is utilized, one of the below must also be selected, except in cases where location is not specified:

<b>Number:</b>	3a
<b>Code Name:</b>	Workplace Sexual Harassment
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with females over 18 that does not involve sexual intercourse, or rape; Does not involve courting, flirtation or muaksa; May include verbal interactions that are not benign in nature; Verbal harassment may be generically described – it's only harassment in the context of other aspects of harassment described; May be generically utilized; Occurs specifically in the workplace setting
<b>Exemplars:</b>	
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	3b
<b>Code Name:</b>	Public Sexual Harassment
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with females over 18 that does not involve sexual intercourse, or rape; Does not involve courting, flirtation or muaksa; May include verbal interactions that are not benign in nature; Verbal harassment may be generically described – it's only harassment in the context of other aspects of harassment described; May be generically utilized; Occurs in any street/public venue, such as transportation, stores, parks, etc.
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Women in public places; Drivers; Downtown
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	3c
<b>Code Name:</b>	Domestic/Familial Abuse & Incest
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with females over 18 that does not involve sexual intercourse, or rape; Does not involve courting, flirtation or muaksa; May include verbal interactions that are not benign in nature; Verbal harassment may be generically described – it's only harassment in the context of other aspects of harassment described; May be generically utilized; Occurs specifically in the home and may involve relatives/family members or strangers/family friends that visit the home.
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Son's wives; Stepfather's
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	3d
<b>Code Name:</b>	Other Individual/Location
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with females over 18 that does not involve sexual intercourse, or rape; Does not involve courting, flirtation or muaksa; May include verbal interactions that are not benign in nature; Verbal harassment may be generically described – it's only harassment in the context of other aspects of harassment described; May be generically utilized; Occurs with those outside of the home and in other locations, such as schools, doctors offices, police stations
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Doctors, Teachers, Neighbors, Servants, Drivers, Police
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	4
<b>Code Name:</b>	Rape
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, or Sexual interaction with individual over 18 that involves forced penetration; Often a specific mention of rape
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Rape
<b>Close But No:</b>	Child Rape

<b>Number:</b>	5
<b>Code Name:</b>	Flirtation/Teasing/Courting/Muakasat
<b>Code Description:</b>	Verbal or Visual interaction of a sexualized nature with individuals over 18 that does not involve sexual intercourse or rape; Does not involve physical interactions, such as touching, groping, rubbing, etc. May co-occur with sexual harassment; May be generically utilized; specific mention of muaksa
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Muaksa
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	6
<b>Code Name:</b>	Sex/Sexual Intercourse/Adultery (Zina)
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical or Sexual Interaction by Adults; Often vaguely utilized; Occurs in the context of discussions of illicit, but consensual sexual relations; Not in the context of child molestation or rape; Not in the context of the non-consensual harassment of women and men EXCEPT in cases where women are harassing men (their husbands). May be the context of actual adultery or secretive relations.
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Sexual Intercourse, Sexual Relations, Problems with Mixed-Gendered Settings (Work and School); Illicit Sex; Zina; Desire
<b>Close But No:</b>	Looks lustfully at women and esp daughters; sexual inclination (in context of harassment)

<b>Number:</b>	7
<b>Code Name:</b>	Teen/Youth Sexual Interplay/Exploration
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical or Sexual Interaction by underage individuals; Often vaguely utilized; Occurs in the context of discussions of illicit, but consensual relations among young individuals; May include context of sexual play or exploration, feeding sexual curiosity; Not in the context of children hurting other children
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Youth Sexuality; Harassment Between Teens; Kissing/Hugging
<b>Close But No:</b>	Children harass other children

<b>Number:</b>	8
<b>Code Name:</b>	Parental Awareness/Responsibility/Response
<b>Code Description:</b>	Role of parents in watching and protecting their children, teaching their children about sexual harassment and sex relations, and helping their children who have been the victims of sexual harassment, assault, or rape. Also, parents not knowing or paying attention to what is happening to their children
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Responsibility of Parents, Role of Socialization, Absence of Mother, Absence of Father; (Un)awareness; (Family Member) Doesn't Believe...; Parent Unaware; Mothers Should Watch Their Children; Parents Should Watch Their Children; Left Child Alone; Don't Blame; Keep Silent; Parents Don't Talk with Children About Sex;
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	9
<b>Code Name:</b>	Homosexuality
<b>Code Description:</b>	The result of sexual harassment, assault or rape on children; often generically utilized; Attempts to overcome this result through psychological assistance or religious means
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Homosexuality; Trends Toward Females and Sometimes Males; Thinking Sexually of Males; Become Gay
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	10
<b>Code Name:</b>	Sexual Deviation
<b>Code Description:</b>	The result of sexual harassment, assault or rape on children that does not result in homosexuality; Includes sexual acts listed as deviant, abnormal, or socially unacceptable. Attempts to overcome this result through psychological assistance or religious means; Not physical trauma/disjunction relations to sexual harassment, assault or rape
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Sodomy, Abnormal, Bisexuality, Masturbation, Deviation; Anal Sexual Assault; Anal Intercourse; Mouth sex
<b>Close But No:</b>	Premature Ejaculation

<b>Number:</b>	11
<b>Code Name:</b>	Sexual Harassment of Men
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, Sexual interaction with males over 18 that does not involve sexual intercourse or rape; Does not include child molestation accounts from adult men;
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Devoured male members; happens to some men
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	12
<b>Code Name:</b>	State Violence
<b>Code Description:</b>	Government, police, military use of sexual harassment, assault and rape on prisoners, or to disburse public protestors in squares
<b>Exemplars:</b>	American soldiers, dogs, prisons, Abu Ghraib, Frighten Girls Down in Squares; Political Tool For Fighting Demonstrations; Political Harassment
<b>Close But No:</b>	

<b>Number:</b>	13
<b>Code Name:</b>	Power/Authority/Control
<b>Code Description:</b>	Exploitation based on differences in structural positions; Patriarchal order; Not in reference to the exploitation of children; Usually men over women, sometimes men over men; Not women over men; Exists in work contexts with bosses over subordinates
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Power to Humiliate and Insult; Exploitation; Men think they deserve what they face; Society Blames Her; Control over others; Power Deficient; Women Turned into Product; Fear of Being Fired; Vulnerable; Can't stop men; Authoritarian System; Masculine Society; Want to Support His Confidence; the System; Inferiority of women
<b>Close But No:</b>	Parental control;

<b>Number:</b>	14
<b>Code Name:</b>	Mob Assault/Harassment
<b>Code Description:</b>	Bodily, Physical, Sexual interaction by a group with (a) female(s) over 18; Group numbers unspecified; Sexual Intercourse or Rape may be Unspecified; Does not include individual-level assault; May be generically utilized
<b>Exemplars:</b>	Mob Assault, Mob Attack, Mob Harassment; Mob Sexual Harassment; Downtown Cairo/Eid ; Gangs
<b>Close But No:</b>	Parental control